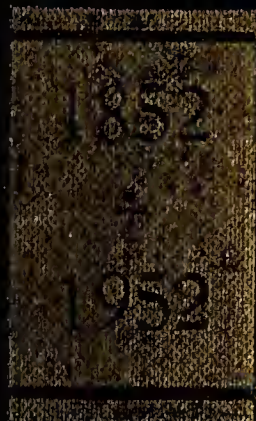


THE FIRST CENTURY
of
CENTRAL
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THE FIRST CENTURY
of

CENTRAL
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH, R.I.

1852-1952

PROVIDENCE

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THIS book was written and edited as a part of the One Hundredth Anniversary Celebration by the following members of the Church:

MARGUERITE APPLETON

HERBERT N. COUCH, *Chairman of the Committee*

GURNEY EDWARDS

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LIST OF PLATES

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Minister of the Church, 1918-1952
- Facing Part I . . . *The Chancel*
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of Mr. and Mrs. Henry W. Wilkinson.
- Opposite Page 57 . . . *The Window of Light, on the wall of the East*
Transept, the gift of the children of Mr.
and Mrs. Frederic Clark Sayles.
- Following Page 64 . . . *The Window of the Heavenly City, on the*
wall of the West Transept, the gift of
Mr. Francis W. Carpenter.



In this book it has been possible, through a gift from the late Mrs. Edward H. Rathbun, to reproduce in color three windows—the Labor Window, also the gift of Mrs. Rathbun, and the windows in the East and West Transepts. All the stained glass windows of the Church were designed by Mr. J. A. Holzer, a native of Alsace-Lorraine, and were made by the Duffner Kimberly Company of New York.



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REV. ARTHUR H. BRADFORD
Minister of the Church, 1918-1952

FOREWORD

THIS little book belongs to the celebration of the One-Hundredth Birthday of the Central Congregational Church.

When a little child has a birthday party the light of candles on a birthday cake shines in happy faces all about. The children present are jolly and gay. Laughter and cries of joyous excitement are heard as candles are blown out, the cake is cut and gifts are given and received.

Birthday parties for grown-up people are different; more different as the years pass. The gay and jolly mood of childhood may be recaptured. Faces of men and women in the candlelight may be just as happy as the faces of four-year olds in care-free celebration. Nevertheless, there is a difference. Grown-ups are conscious of the passage of the years. The fact may not be mentioned, but they are quietly conscious that their birthdays will not go on forever. Gaiety is tempered by growing thankfulness for the gift of life, by deepening faith that the Giver of life may be trusted for all the unknown future.

The birthday party of a church is different from any other party whatsoever. It has, or should have, the jolly abandon of spirit so natural to little children. In it, also, is the reverent gratitude of mature people who have learned to value life as a precious gift. But there is something more.

The "something more" in the birthday party of a church is not due to the fact that the church is an institution. Other institutions may celebrate their birthdays with bold assertion of pride in their achievement. They may rightly say, though in terms of courteous consideration of others,—
"See how we have done better than our competitors! Come to our party! There will be a cake with one hundred candles. Share with us as we re-

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joice that our institution is now so big and strong, so capable of becoming yet bigger and stronger.”

That is all right for other institutions. It would be out of character for a church. When a church realizes that it is a hundred years old it sees that fact against the background of eternity. The life of a church cannot be measured in years. There is a timeless quality in the life of every church. Its purpose is “to live the eternal life in the midst of time, by the strength and under the eyes of God.”

Pride of achievement, however, is not out of place at the birthday party of a church. Thankful its people may be for what those who have gone before have done; thankful, too, for what they themselves may have been enabled to do. But all their pride and joy will be tempered with humility.

Phillips Brooks tells us that “the true way to be humble is not to stoop till you are smaller than yourself, but to stand at your real height against some higher nature that shall show you what the real smallness of your greatest greatness is.”

As we celebrate the One-Hundredth Birthday of our Church we “remember Jesus Christ” and, in his presence, we pray to be humble of heart. Mindful of his desire that his followers should become like little children, we rejoice to be jolly and gay, with the light of a hundred birthday candles shining in happy faces all round the family table. Yet, we would not forget that our Christian ideal is infinitely above all our accomplishment. We would always remember that our years are set in the eternity of Him who is from everlasting to everlasting.

The pages which follow tell the story of a century in the life of our church. The story has been written with painstaking care and earnest

F O R E W O R D

devotion by five of our church members. To them and to the editors of this volume is given the gratitude of our whole Fellowship of Faith.

Now, by way of a Prayer for our Birthday Party, let me suggest these lines, taken from a "Prayer for Success", written by Robert Louis Stevenson: "Lord, behold our family here assembled. We thank Thee for this place in which we dwell; for the love that unites us; for the peace accorded us this day; for the hope with which we expect the morrow. . . . Give us courage and gaiety and the quiet mind. . . . Bless us, if it may be, in all our innocent endeavours. If it may not, give us the strength to encounter that which is to come, that we be brave in peril, constant in tribulation, temperate in wrath, and in all changes of fortune, and down to the gates of death, loyal and loving one to another. As the clay to the potter, as the windmill to the wind, as children of their sire, we beseech of Thee this help and mercy for Christ's sake." Amen.

ARTHUR H. BRADFORD

The Parsonage

November 16, 1951

INTRODUCTION

WHAT are the features which should characterize an historical sketch of the first hundred years of a church's existence? A record of growth, a chronicle of faithful endeavor by generations of devoted members, a listing of projects commenced and carried to completion, an appraisal of the impact of the church upon its adherents and upon the community? These are obvious answers. But how are they to be most effectively accomplished, and how may the fulfillment of the task contribute to the spirit of the Centennial Anniversary itself, which is an augury of future service and not a serene contemplation of the past?

The observance of a century of growth inevitably invites a different attitude from that with which one approaches an appraisal of one-half or one-quarter of that time, significant though these anniversaries are. After a quarter century of speeding years, men and women who were present and active at the birth of the church, now grown more dignified and grave but stoutly denying any suggestion that old age had begun to take its toll, pause to look back on their achievement with a mingling of pride and humility; they address themselves to the tasks of the future; they examine the bulwarks of the fortress; and they give thought to the training of younger apprentices for duties which one day will be theirs. After fifty years younger men are in positions of responsibility, but the church is not wanting in the counsel of those who knew the early years of work and faith, and

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the continuity of effort is attested in the vigorous service of men and women whose earliest Christian experiences were within the same religious body.

But when a full cycle of a hundred years has rolled around, the problem takes on new aspects and new dimensions. Not a single face is seen in the pews that was there at the church's birth; the torch has passed to other hands; the present and the future alike are entrusted to those who have learned their lessons of faith from men and women who built nobly in their own confidence in things to come. "Old men plant trees the fruits of which they will never see," observed Cicero in a philosophic essay *On Old Age*. The Church now embraces within its own experience and record every phase of the pageant of life—the merry heedlessness of childhood, the gay insouciance of youth, the serious purpose of maturity, and that larger vision of age, which builds on the faith of things unseen. Names are not forgotten; they are cherished in an inscription on a memorial window whose beauty ministers to all, recorded in the book of remembrance, cherished in the hearts of those who were once privileged to work with men and women who thought nobly and toiled bravely, and revived many a time in the persons of young scions of older families who now assume the leadership of the youth organizations within the church. And to mingle with the old familiar names the inclusive welcome of active Christianity constantly adds new ones, names whose origins go back to other states and other lands.

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It was not the dearth but the richness of the records that embarrassed those who undertook to bring into compass a consecutive story of the growth of the Church for a hundred years. In the end the method of treatment was solved by compromise and by the latitude granted to the different committee members who assumed responsibility for a portion of the story as to whether they should approach their task from a personal or an impersonal point of view. The body of factual material, gathered and preserved by conscientious scribes and faithful archivists remains in secure keeping, but the Committee has kept in mind the objective of the Anniversary itself, that is, the creation of a mood of courage and optimism for the future, not a static record of the past.

The purpose of this historical sketch is, therefore, to present through the record of the Church a still larger picture, that of a religious community, evolving and developing as a vital part of the growth of American life during the last half of one century and the first half of another. Our Church has grown and gathered strength through wars and depressions, through economic and social upheaval; it has clung fast to the faith of its founders and at the same time has developed the elasticity that welcomes change; it has benefited by the diversity of its membership no less than by the unity of its fellowship.

One hundred years ago Providence was a more sober, or, perhaps one should say, a more somber city than it now is.

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Neither motor cars nor buses, dance halls nor moving pictures, golf or television were present to lure youth and their elders from the paths of orthodox Sunday worship. Thus it is, perhaps, that, as Professor George tells of the founding of the new society, the word "orthodox" creeps early into his narrative, both in the official wording of the charter and in the mood of those who fostered the origins and ministered to the needs of the new religious body during the first three decades of its life.

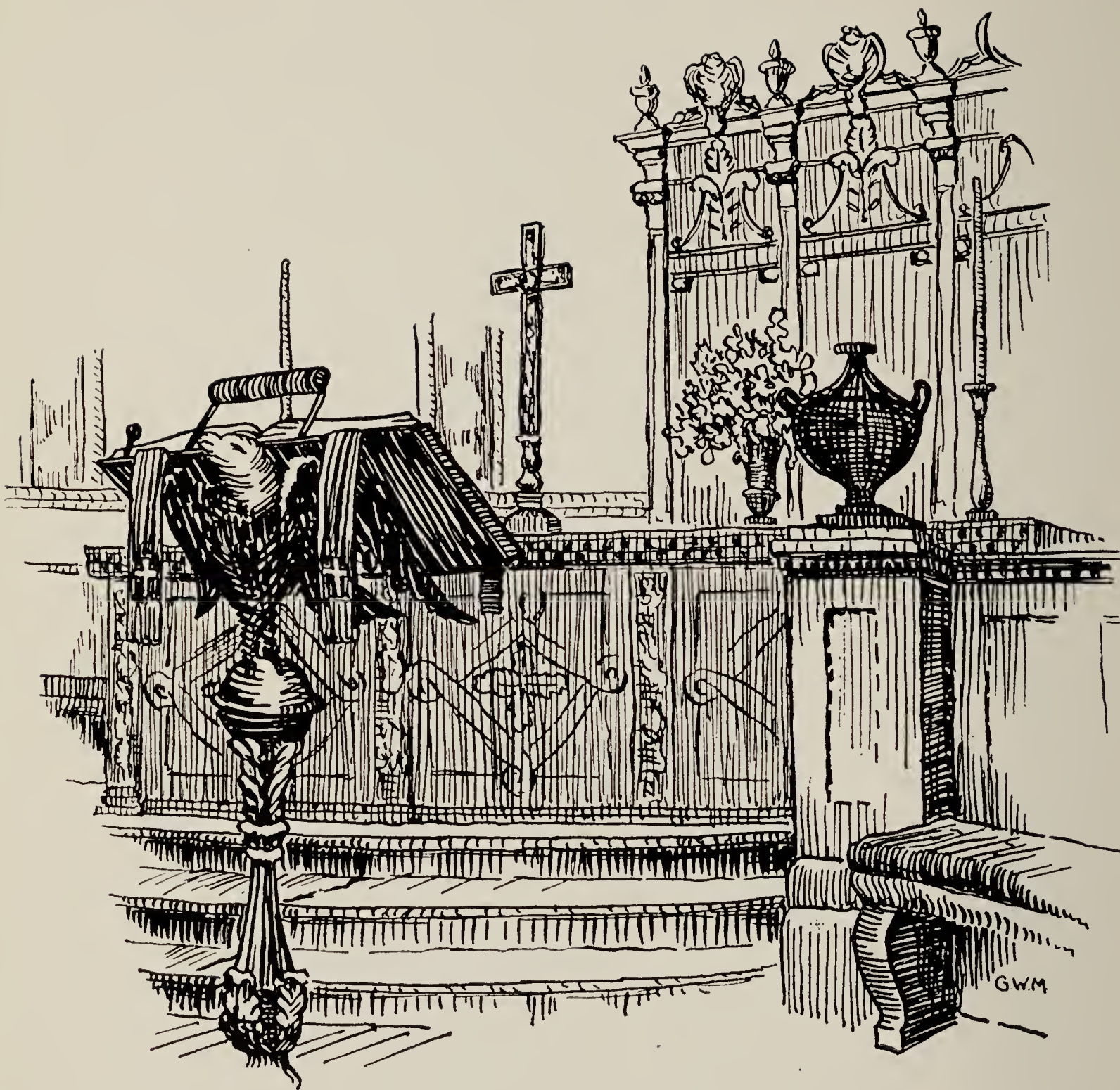
*The Window of Labor, on the north side of
the East Transept, the gift of the children of
Mr. and Mrs. Henry W. Wilkinson.*



IN LOVING MEMORY
HENRY W. WILKINSON
AUG. 20 1835 - MAY 6 1898

LABOR

IN LOVING MEMORY
HARRIET REED WILKINSON
AUG. 30 1836 - OCT. 5 1916

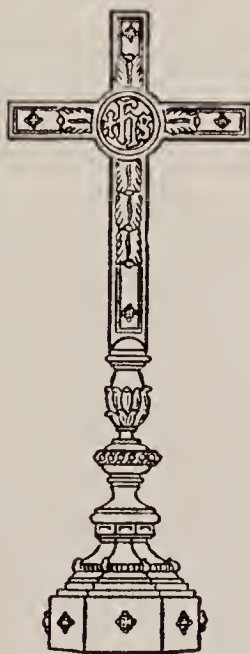


PART I

A VENTURE OF FAITH

1852 - 1883

By ROBERT H. GEORGE



A VENTURE OF FAITH

ON April 24, 1852, following the organization meeting of March 18, the first service was held in the basement Lecture Room of the new Central Congregational Church on Benefit Street. The new society and the new structure were the result of the desire of a zealous group of church-goers to have a church in Providence in closer proximity to their homes on the growing East Side than the meeting houses then existing west of the river. Attempts were made to satisfy this desire in 1836 and again a decade later. Both were frustrated, but the undaunted projectors persevered. In 1850 they obtained a charter for their "orthodox society", and by March of 1851 they had raised the sum of \$44,000 "for land and building a house of worship". Added funds were required almost at once, for no one contractor was willing to undertake the construction of the new edifice and even in the mid-nineteenth century actual expenses exceeded estimates. Supplementary subscriptions bore testimony to the industry of Mr. John Kingsbury and others of the founding fathers, and though the cost of the new building amounted to nearly \$59,000, it was dedicated on September 28, 1852 free from debt.

The new church was a sober sandstone structure flanked by truncated towers whose wooden steeples had been eliminated from the first plans, doubtless in the interest of economy. Yet, as its designers intended, it was marked by "as much simple beauty as was consistent" with the size and

shape of the Benefit Street lot and the need to provide a spacious "audience room" on the first floor and a "lecture room" and Sunday School rooms in the basement. The desire and need to make full use of available space had forced the architect to thrust aside plans for a church with a single steeple and may have been responsible for fronting the church directly on the sidewalk.

The raising of funds and the building operations were paralleled by the perfection of the new group's religious foundations and the provision of a pastor. Articles of Faith were developed in meetings held in the house of Mr. William J. King in March, 1852, and in that same month the organization of the Church was completed at a Council held in the Beneficent Church. Its membership at that time consisted of eighty-two persons, whose "full and regular standing" was duly certified by letters testimonial. Even earlier, in the previous September, the Rev. Leonard Swain, of Nashua, New Hampshire had been approached by those seeking a "Pastor and Teacher". He had then indicated his willingness to accept, but the invitation by the Church was of necessity delayed until its formal organization, and his letter of acceptance bore the date of April 3, 1852.

At the time when this letter was written Leonard Swain was a comparatively young man of thirty-one. He had early made it a condition of his acceptance that the Church should be free from debt. Such a stipulation was born not so much of a desire to avoid assuming a burden, as of a wish to require that his new parishioners should give this tangible evidence of their Christian zeal. But his formal acceptance made it

clear that he required much of himself. It was motivated by a stern sense of duty to accept an opportunity to do more "for the great ends of Christian ministry". This duty he strove mightily to perform throughout the period of his pastorate. He laid upon others the injunction to work in the Lord's vineyard and he steadily observed it himself. Those who knew him testify to the fervor of his prayers, and bear tribute to his simple and urgent appeal to his hearers to consecrate their lives to the Christian purpose, and to accept Christ as their master. His inaugural sermon was on the sobering and stimulating text: "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it". His last sermons, "written for the impenitent of my congregation", merely reaffirm the life-long purposes of the devoted pastor of a flock. They constitute a personal plea that men attend to the salvation of their souls, that they be real Christians in character and in influence, that they "decide for Christ today" since their decision here and now "will be the very sentence" pronounced upon them by Christ "when He shall sit upon the throne of judgment". This pressing Calvinistic concern for duty, this demand that men accept and follow the Master, seems to have been the very essence of Dr. Swain's spiritual character. The Church benefited from it, and, though voiced in terms which a later age would rate as austere, his parishioners came to appreciate the exalted truths their pastor stressed, and to love the man who on occasion castigated them.

Devotion, a sense of duty, and a goodly measure of austerity naturally mark the early history of what was popularly

styled "the two horse carriage Church". Its deacons were indefatigable. Among their number John Kingsbury is said to have made it a practice to call upon each church family each year, and Mr. William J. King was the devoted Superintendent of the Sunday School for the long space of twenty-two years following his assumption of that office in 1852. The deacons supported a resolution passed at the first annual meeting of the Church which deserves full quotation.

Whereas, the solemnity of Public Worship requires silence, order and reverence, therefore

Resolved, that we will strive to enter and leave the House of God in silence, to keep our children under our particular care, and to prevent them, as far as it may be possible, from leaving the house during divine service; and to avoid leaving our pews, or to make preparation to leave them, until the benediction has been fully pronounced.

Even more purposeful and austere was Article 12 of the By-Laws of the Church adopted on May 18, 1852.

In the view of this Church, the manufacture, sale or use of intoxicating beverages, attendance upon the theater or the circus, the practice of dancing, of travelling upon the Sabbath for business or pleasure, and of visiting the Post Office upon that day, are inconsistent with a correct Christian Profession.

This was no set of empty phrases as items in the records of the Church in its early decades testify. Confession of offense, or imputations against the character of individuals led to investigations by Committees composed of deacons and others. "Admonition" was a mild penalty; "suspension" was obviously more rigorous; "termination of relations with the Church", often described by the blunt word "excom-

munication", was the more usual punishment, although a letter of repentance written eight years after sentence had been delivered might lead to restoration of membership. Nevertheless, social gatherings in the homes of members of the congregation were a feature of the early life of the Church.

Early in its history the Church sought to enrich its services with music. At the first meeting of the Church on March 20, 1852, "Temple Melodies" was adopted for use as soon as funds might be raised, and six years later "after a somewhat protracted discussion", it was voted that congregational singing be adopted, with the congregation facing the pulpit rather than the choir loft. The treasurer's accounts record payments for blowing the organ and for singing.

The Sunday School was established at once and flourished. In 1853 it reported a total membership of 288. In 1855 it had 370 including a band of devoted teachers who, we can well imagine, faced the usual problems provided by ever lively youth.

That same Sunday School is found contributing its offerings for the support of a missionary, an action which reflects the prevailing interest of the Church in Christian Service. The name of Miss Nancy Marsh became inseparable from that of the City Mission, and as early as 1853 the Church treasurer reported total contributions of over \$4,000 for such benevolent purposes as Missions, Western Colleges, and the Colored Shelter. Scanty records tell of the substantial proceeds of "special collections" or of "monthly concerts" being devoted to "the poor of the Church", the American Board,

the Home Missionary Society, and Yale College. In Dr. Swain's pastorate these gifts of money were supplemented by the gifts produced by the newly established Sewing Society, which thus early began its work of packing missionary boxes "in behalf of our Western Home Missionary". Worthy causes were thus receiving appropriate support. It is interesting to note that only a few new beneficiaries appear in the days of the Civil War. Among them were the National Freedmen's Association, and the Sanitary Commission, an organization which provided medical supplies and nursing care for the wounded. In 1861 \$10.00 went to provide books for the Rhode Island Second Regiment, and later, in 1867, a collection of twenty times that amount was placed at the disposal of "destitute Southerners". Civilian aid for the Armed Forces did not then develop on so large a scale as in later emergencies, and apparently the Church, as an organization, did not play so active a role as it was later to do.

Dr. Swain must have been gratified at the steady growth of his Church. As has been noted, it listed a membership of eighty-two at the time of its organization in March 1852, but twenty-seven more joined before the year was out. In 1857 membership had increased to 206, in 1862 it stood at 318 and in 1867 at 373. The ratio of men to women favored the ladies by the pretty constant figure of rather more than two to one.

Unhappily Dr. Swain's bodily strength did not match his abounding spiritual energies. In 1860 the Church, observing his ill health, made possible a five month's holiday in Europe, but the hoped-for recovery did not prove permanent, and in

May 1868, after a six month's leave of absence, he informed the Church that "my physicians tell me that my work as a settled pastor is done". His letter of resignation was a most moving one, thanking God for the "outward prosperity", "the unusual harmony", and "especially for the spiritual increase in numbers and in strength which has been graciously vouchsafed to us". At the insistence of the Church he remained as nominal pastor, but the first minister's probity caused him to insist that any successor during his lifetime should not be a mere associate but "*the* pastor". Still exhibiting his care for his congregation Leonard Swain died on July 14, 1869, and his bereaved Church appropriately marked "his singular perception of duty" and "his unreserved consecration to Christ and His service" and voiced its gratitude for the privilege of associating with one who "has left us with a memory of a life almost faultless and worthy the imitation of every Christian minister and brother".

From 1868 until January, 1872, Central Church was without a minister. Mr. William J. King served as its permanent chairman while committees, assisted by a day of fasting and prayer on the part of the congregation, sought a permanent pastor. Dr. George H. Gould filled the pulpit for the better part of a year during the period of search, but on December 11, 1871 the Church voted to call another young man to its service in the person of the Rev. George Harris, Jr. of Auburn, Maine. He was only twenty-seven years old, well trained, and one whose genuine humility was accompanied by a genial sense of humor. It was this latter, and rare, combination which led him later to declare that the Church had

failed to obtain an eminent man, and finally determined to take a young man without a reputation on the strength of a single sermon "which showed promise of better things". That promise was fulfilled in the course of a pastorate which covered the eleven years from February, 1872, until the end of 1882.

The period of Dr. Harris' pastorate was marked by lively theological controversy within the Protestant community, but, although he was himself a skilled theologian, his accent was on religion rather than on theology in a dogmatic sense. He himself insisted that he not merely allowed but encouraged differences of opinion and that in his day "the pulpit has been untrammelled and so has the church". However, he was quick to add that "the exercise of spiritual liberty has served to bind us together as one". In such a Protestant and, we may say, humanistic spirit he preached from the pulpit and taught in the Sunday School of which he was Superintendent for two years. And we may be sure that he exhibited the same spirit in his personal contacts. They were many and intimate, for he was correct in his declaration that he was one who "relished human companionship".

In keeping with such a humane spirit an effort was made to modify the rigorous and explicit prohibitions of Article 12 of the By-Laws. It failed because of the lack of the three-quarters majority required for its passage. Dr. Harris later observed that those who voted against the amendment probably thought that "so gay a church should not have too much freedom". It is interesting in this connection to note the two cases of discipline under the old article which have come to

light and fall within this period. One, for a violation of the laws of morality which had led to a conviction in the Supreme Court of Rhode Island, resulted in the dissolution of the offender's connection with the Church. The other, which involved a like offense, but for which penitence was expressed, resulted in the recommendation of suspension for the space of six months. What a later age might regard as austerity was still in evidence in the late 1870's.

With the help of others, among them Mr. Edward K. Gleazen, organist of Central Church, Dr. Harris provided new collections of hymns and psalms designed to add to the reverence and richness of worship, for with him it was an article of faith that "people are educated in religion by worship almost as much as by preaching and teaching". With similar intent slight changes were made in the services of song, and a new organ, later moved to the Church on Angell Street, was installed. The "Ministry of Music" thus gained in stature and effect.

The Church continued to grow. In 1872 its membership was 375. It was 487 in 1877, when the number of new admissions reached the surprising figure of 82, and in 1882 it was 503. Pew rents remained, as from the beginning, a very substantial item of annual income, but at Dr. Harris' suggestion the varied collections of earlier years were replaced by a system of weekly offerings. The minister modestly declared that this device did not deserve the name of "the Harris system", but under it gifts were doubled. The total of benevolences was impressive and was now further supplemented by the fruitful labors of such active groups as "The

Willing Hands” and “The Cheerful Workers”. At least two members of the first-named group devoted their later lives to the Foreign Missionary field.

In December, 1882, Dr. Harris’ resignation was reluctantly accepted by a congregation whose confidence in and affection for their minister had steadily grown over the years. His ill health, and that of his wife, had caused him to accept leaves of absence in earlier years, but the final break was occasioned by his election as Abbott Professor of Systematic Theology at Andover Theological Seminary. He would not have accepted any other pastorate, but he felt impelled to accept the duty of “helping to shape the doctrines and character of our ministry”. In accepting his new post George Harris further emphasized his Protestant and humanistic belief by carefully stipulating to the Andover Authorities that he assented to their creed “as containing substantially the system of truth taught in the Holy Scripture”. In his mind the word “substantially” was the crux of the matter. It allowed him that measure of intellectual freedom which he demanded for himself and which he had been ever ready to allow to others.

TRANSITION

FOR thirty years the new Church had pursued its way until time had taken from it the consciousness of extreme youth, and perhaps also some of the conservatism with which youth, to its own surprise, clothes its first steps on new and significant ventures. A Calvinistic sense of duty, a conviction of the urgency of the moment, and a mood of austerity as the appropriate accompaniment of the religious mind mark the initial period. These were characteristic alike of the stage of the Church's development and of the external scene of society in which it was growing.

Nevertheless, signs of change were in the air, not least manifest when the first efforts to effect modification of the precise rules failed of passage. There was vigor in the body of the society, and the power of growth was inherent in the very conviction of those who preached a doctrine of salvation by the tested paths of the past.

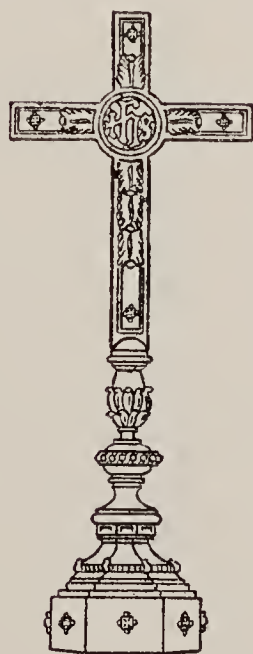
As we enter on the period that was to carry the Church to the mid-century point of its own existence, to the close of the Victorian Era with all that it implies of good and of short-comings in spiritual vision, and over the dividing line between the nineteenth and the twentieth century, we find something of the stirring of imagination which kindles new enterprises in the minds of men. The physical structure of the past had been outgrown, the promise of the future demanded bold concepts and vigorous action. Nor did the church search its own members in vain for those who should carry the vision forward. This is the tale that Miss Marguerite Appleton has to tell as she takes up the story of Central Congregational Church in the second stage of its life.

PART II

THE PERIOD OF GROWTH

1884 - 1902

By MARGUERITE APPLETON



THE PERIOD OF GROWTH

AS we trace the history of the Church, it seems as though the resignation of Dr. Harris in 1882 clearly marks the end of one era and the beginning of another in which the four year pastorate of the Rev. Charles W. Huntington served as a sort of interlude. At that time the church membership was still comparatively small, approximately 500. There were very few organizations within the Church, although the Women's Auxiliary of the Womens' Board of Foreign Missions with its younger group, the Young Girls' Mission Circle, and the Womens' Home Missionary Society were tireless in working for their respective causes. Each group met weekly, and in addition to substantial financial contributions, supplies of all kinds were sent to missions and charitable projects in the state, the nation, and in other parts of the world. In 1887 the Ministering Childrens' League was established under the loving guidance of Mrs. Francis Carpenter and Mrs. Edwin A. Barrows for the purpose of interesting little children in the work of foreign missions. In 1885 Mr. Huntington had organized the Young Peoples' Alliance, the forerunner of the Christian Endeavor.

That church membership demanded positive personal responsibility can be seen from a brief note in 1885 that the names of three persons were stricken from the role of members; one because of "denial of the faith"; another because of "modified views of religious faith"; and a third on account of "repeated absence from church services and a refusal to obey the rules of the church". These instances

may well be borne in mind for the light that they throw on the changed attitude that was to appear at the end of the century.

The most important event of Mr. Huntington's pastorate was the addition of the Blackstone Park Sunday School, which had begun its existence in the Beane Barn off Butler Avenue as a department of our Sunday School. The Blackstone Park Sunday School had been organized to fill the need for a religious center in the Wayland Square section of the city. As it happened, the majority of the families living in that neighborhood were affiliated with Central Church, and therefore it was natural that the Sunday School, although at first non-denominational, sooner or later become a department of our Church. When, in 1887, this change was made, Mr. Thomas B. Stockwell was appointed Superintendent. Two years later the Blackstone Chapel, which many people still remember clearly, was built at the corner of Wayland Avenue and Angell Street, and for the next five years the little turreted and gabled building served as an outpost of the Church. Regular services under the leadership of the Minister were held there Sunday evenings; its Sunday School grew by leaps and bounds, and it was not long before a Young Peoples' Society, and a Christian Endeavor Society were organized.

Meanwhile, the resignation of Mr. Huntington in 1888 to become Minister at the High Street Congregational Church in Lowell, Massachusetts, made it necessary to find another pastor. In October of the following year an invitation was sent to Dr. Edward C. Moore, of the Westminster

Presbyterian Church of Yonkers, New York, declaring that, "We believe that here is opened to you in the ordering of Providence a field of increased usefulness in the service of the Master". Dr. Moore accepted the call and three months later preached his first sermon in the church on Benefit Street. Grave and thoughtful, yet expressing a warm friendliness, Dr. Moore proved an ideal spiritual leader, while Mrs. Moore quickly became an admired and beloved member of the Central Church family.

With the coming of Dr. Moore the Church entered on a period of growth and expansion in almost every field. The membership increased steadily, with the result that within a short time it was necessary to add an Assistant Minister to the staff. Mr. John J. Walker, of Andover Seminary, assumed the duties of Assistant Minister and shared the work of the pastorate with dependability and loyalty. Fresh life was infused into the existing organizations, and some new groups were formed. In 1898 the Marsh Paper Mission was started. Begun in a quiet way through the interest of Miss Nancy Marsh, Missionary of our Church at the Sailors' Bethel in Providence, this project was maintained by the members of the Christian Endeavor Society. Magazines and books were collected and distributed to lighthouses and lightships along the Atlantic Coast. When we learn that an average of fifteen to twenty thousand magazines a year were sent to various points along the coast, we can easily imagine the gratitude of those men, in the days before radio and television, for something to read while serving at their lonely stations.

Early in Dr. Moore's pastorate an important step was taken by voting to assume as a missionary project the Portuguese living in the Fox Point district. This stemmed from the work of Miss Marsh at the Sailors' Bethel. At the same time the responsibility for the Mission was not undertaken without careful deliberation, for it was realized that it would entail the maintenance of a staff of teachers and leaders of various activities, provision for a worship service on Sundays and two midweek services, as well as a Sunday School, and, of course, increased financial burdens. As always, however, the widening of our spiritual horizon by including the Portuguese Mission as "one of ours" was gladly accepted. The continued success in carrying the Gospel of Jesus and the principles of Christian living to these "strangers within our gates" is due to the devoted labors of scores of individual members of our Church over a period of many years.

It was not long before new projects were instituted at the Mission—industrial classes for the women, a night school for the men, a kindergarten for the children. The names of many workers come to mind, such as Mr. James Day, Mr. Ellsworth Torrey, Mr. Robert Burbank, Mr. Seeber Edwards, who acted as Superintendents of the Sunday School, Mrs. Benjamin Buffum, Mrs. Franklin J. Sawtelle, Mrs. Frederic Fuller, who took charge of the womens' groups. No one person, however, was more closely associated with the life of the Mission than Mr. Frederic Fuller, who year in and year out poured his care and affection into the little group who worshipped together in the small wooden building

on Transit Street. Mr. Fuller hardly ever missed a service there; he held a Bible Class for men on Mondays at twelve o'clock noon; he knew the names of all the families which attended the Mission; yes, and he knew how many sons and daughters they had and *their* names, too, even down to the new baby. He visited their homes, counseled, and encouraged them all, and gave them an everlasting example of Christian faith.

It was during this period that a fundamental decision had to be made. It had been evident for some time that the Church had come to the cross-roads. Fewer and fewer families from the West Side were taking part in the life of the Church, while most of the new members lived on the East Side. It was obvious that the Church's "center of gravity" was steadily shifting eastward over College Hill. A committee consisting of Mr. Francis Carpenter, Mr. John W. Danielson, Mr. Frederic Fuller, Mr. Frederic C. Sayles, and Mr. Frederic Talbot, appointed to study the situation, finally recommended that a move be made and that Diman Place be selected as the new location. To some people Diman Place seemed practically on the outskirts of the city, but in reality it represented much more adequately than Benefit Street the parish of Central Church. In 1890, therefore, after long and thoughtful discussion, for it was indeed a serious question, it was voted unanimously to make the move and build a new church. A campaign to raise the necessary funds for building followed, and Messrs. Carrère and Hastings of New York were engaged as architects, while Mr. Franklin J. Sawtelle was asked to serve as supervising

and constructing architect in Providence. In July, 1891, the cornerstone was laid.

Meanwhile, during the pleasant bustle of construction and decoration of the church building proper, Memorial Chapel, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. John W. Danielson and Miss Amelia Lockwood, in memory of their parents and grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Amos D. Lockwood, was completed on the new site. With its spacious room for Sunday School or other services, its numerous small class rooms, a special location for the "Infant Room"—the beloved Fireplace Room—and a kitchen, it seemed more than adequate for all possible needs for the present and future. It immediately became the social center for the church, and hummed with activity almost every day in the week, for it served as a meeting place for the organizations which hitherto had been forced either to meet in private homes, or in a rented Club Room on South Main Street. Already the character of life within the Church was changing with the growing physical facilities.

The last Thursday evening meeting on Benefit Street was held in the Vestry of the church on April 15, 1892. Dr. Swain's portrait had been placed in front of the pulpit and was flanked on either side by photographs of former members. Deacon Torrey read a paper on the history of the Church, and Mr. Graham gave some informal reminiscences. As the dear, familiar hymns were sung, probably many in the congregation were filled with nostalgia, even though they agreed with Dr. Moore when he declared that, "While we cling to the past with tenacity (which is fitting), yet we

should rather look to the present and to the future as that is where our work lies". More than a half century later, as we face our hundredth anniversary, his words still express our will and purpose.

During the early months in the new Chapel, where the first service had been held on Easter Sunday, April 17, 1892, the members were watching the building of the church with eager interest. As they saw the structure rising in the style of the Renaissance, symbolic of the spirit of liberty, new birth, and hope, their eagerness must have outrun their patience.

It had been decided to concentrate all the decoration of the interior on the pulpit and the chancel. Thus the eyes and the spirits of the congregation would be irresistibly drawn to the chancel where the lectern, the gift of the Young People's Societies, and the communion table, purchased from the legacy of Miss Nancy Marsh, were to stand. For the rest, the interior was to depend for beauty on structural proportions, dignity, and complete simplicity.

The design for the chancel, with its wealth of Christian symbolism, was the work of Mr. Schladermundt of New York, and its rich and colorful painting was made possible through the generosity of Mr. Francis Carpenter. As one gazes upward, one sees the Lamb of God in the center of the arch with Providence, in the shape of a beautiful woman expressing God's loving care, on one side, and Virtue, strong and courageous in helmet and breast plate, on the other. Within the circular dome a magnificent cross, the great symbol of Christianity, stands out against a golden yellow

background—yellow for the sun, and the goodness of God, for marriage, and faith, and fruitfulness. In the exact center of the cross is a dove representing the Holy Spirit, while the four Evangelists are painted on the four arms. St. Matthew is pictured as a man, for his Gospel tells of the humanity of Christ's ministry; St. Mark is portrayed with a lion's head because of his leonine Gospel of the Kingship of Christ; St. Luke is represented with the head of an ox, the animal traditionally used in sacrifice, as his Gospel emphasizes the priesthood and sacrifice of Jesus; while St. John in the form of an eagle expresses the divinity of Jesus. The familiar letters IHS at the foot of the cross have for centuries stood for Jesus the Savior of Mankind. Three narrow panels on the right and left side of the center are filled with multi-colored plants or shrubs in full bloom which suggest, not only the beauty of the Christian church, but recall the innumerable references in the Bible to the beauties of Nature. Around the base of the dome, the artist painted in soft colors a wide luxuriant vine to remind the worshipper of one of the best loved sayings of Christ: "I am the vine, and ye are the branches". Two deer, sipping of the living waters against the vine, and two peacocks, symbolical of immortality, add to the richness of the border. Underneath runs the glorious song of the angels on the night that Christ was born: "Glory to God in the Highest and on Earth Peace, Good Will toward Men".

In spite of some anxiety caused by the financial situation of the country in 1893, the church was finished in the early fall and was dedicated in November of that year. It was a

beautiful autumn Sunday morning when the members of Central Church met together for the first time in their new building, and many guests had been invited to rejoice with them. The Rev. George Harris and the Rev. Mr. Huntington, closely associated with the life of the Church in recent years, Dr. E. Benjamin Andrews, President of Brown University, and Bishop Clark, of the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island, assisted Dr. Moore in the morning service. In the afternoon a Communion service was held at which the ministers of all the Congregational churches in the state sat in the chancel, and deacons of neighboring churches served. Dr. James G. Vose, of the Beneficent Congregational Church, the Senior Congregational Minister of Rhode Island, was the preacher. In the evening still another service with special music was held. Professor George C. Moore, the brother of Dr. Moore, preached the sermon. At all three services the Church was filled to overflowing, since a great effort had been made to see that every one, even the aged and infirm, could share in the worship of God and the general rejoicing that day. Thus reverently did Central Church transfer its life to a new and larger edifice and signify its consecration to a new and larger future.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close the minds of the members of the church were directed to many other things. Possibly as a result of the attitude of a younger generation that had never known the religious austerity of Dr. Swain's era, new currents of thought were working within the Church. The whole question of the meaning of membership, requirements for joining the Church, and the

Rules of the Church had been under discussion for some time. In 1894 the necessity for subscribing to the Articles of Faith as a test of Christian belief was abandoned, and four years later a set of revised Rules was accepted. Nevertheless, the Puritan influence can still be noted in Rule X, for instance, which states; "Members are expected to abstain from every pursuit and amusement which shall interfere with growth in holiness or Christian usefulness". At about the same time the Church officially adopted as its name, the Central Congregational Church, and began to issue a weekly printed calendar containing notices of all kinds, thus doing away with the old custom of verbal announcements of various activities from the pulpit. A measure of formalism necessarily accompanied the growth of the Church.

In January, 1899, Dr. Moore's tenth anniversary as pastor was celebrated, and the growth of the Church in the last decade was reviewed with satisfaction. The increased membership, the flourishing Sunday School, now combined with the Blackstone Park Chapel Sunday School, the Sunday services, with an afternoon Vesper service replacing the old Sunday evening service, the many strong and active organizations for men, women, and young people, the widespread interest in the Portuguese Mission and its heart-warming development, to say nothing of the beautiful church building and Memorial Chapel, all indicated that Central Church was prospering in its life and its good works, and in its beloved minister.

Two years longer Dr. Moore served as minister, and then in December, 1901, just over the threshold of the new

century, he was offered the position of Parkman Professor of Theology at Harvard University. His resignation three months later was a source of deep and universal regret, so completely had he become the center of the spiritual and social life of the church. At the same time there was a feeling of genuine satisfaction that from Central Church there should be drawn an inspired teacher to continue his life work in the field of religious scholarship.

As Dr. Moore prepared to leave the Church, and as he recalled the friendships of those men and women who labored with him to make the Church a living and vital institution, the young couples he had married, the boys and girls he had taught and baptized, and the parting by death of the older members of the Church at whose funerals he had read the words of comfort from the Gospels, he found it hard to measure and evaluate accurately the innumerable activities of his pastorate. He remarked, "Those real employments seemed always to me to be study and reading and thought, the writing of sermons, preparing myself to speak and to teach, the endeavor to understand the religious life of men, and the needs of men . . . and beyond this study and thought and writing, the chief other employment that was real and central was the meeting of men and women in the pastoral relation, entering their homes at the times when they laid open to me the depths of their lives, and seeking to bring to them the help of the truth in their need . . . The real issue of the years should be in the lives of men and women something so deep in their souls and withal so lasting that of that life no man may take measure or write a tale."

In the life of an individual twelve years is a comparatively short span, but the twelve years of Dr. Moore's leadership of Central Church had been full and eventful ones, and now the Church had definitely set its feet in the new paths.

TRANSITION

THE Church was no longer young. Fifty years is a respectable span in the life of an institution as well as of an individual. The early faith had been justified, crises had been met, major decisions affecting the direction of growth had been made in a spirit of judicious appraisal and consecrated purpose. And Central Church was proving itself a significant element in the religious life of the denomination.

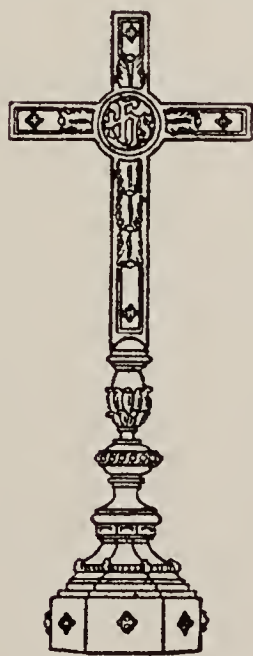
Austerity was yielding to a more generous understanding of human needs and to an awareness that the degree of Christian service did not depend on the exaction of uniform codes of conduct and belief. Perhaps, too, there was a growing sense of competence in the knowledge that the Church had served as the training ground for a man who had gone on to a position of responsibility in the education of future theologians. What should be the attitude of those who now must look to the next half-century? That decision had inevitably been framed in terms of the selection of a new minister, and there was a firm purpose that no deadening hand of convention should stand in the way of progress. There was a disposition, even in the comparative quiet of American society at the turn of the century, to welcome vigorous thought and a pioneering spirit, for the Church had built into her fibre the strength with which to meet controversy if that were to be its lot.

In the light of perspective, with sympathy, understanding, and skill, Mr. George L. Miner offers a study and appraisal of the strong convictions, differences, and purposes of those who in the third period of the church's life, one marked alike by dispute and maturity, guided the destinies of the religious community.

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PART III
MATURITY
1903-1917

By GEORGE L. MINER



MATURITY

THE third period of the history of Central Church is aptly termed the period of maturity. Its fourteen years from 1903 to 1917 embraced two vividly contrasting pastorates—five years under the Rev. Edward F. Sanderson and, after a year's interim, seven years under Dr. Gaius Glenn Atkins. The Sanderson regime was rich in drama. The young and popular minister led a valiant attempt to have Central Church adopt and enlarge a down-town mission for discharged prisoners and fallen women. Eight of the ten men of the Standing Committee were reluctant to follow, Mr. Sanderson suddenly resigned, the congregation took sides for and against, and the scars of the encounter lasted for years. The Atkins regime that followed was intellectual and scholarly; its thoughtful atmosphere brought tranquility.

THE SPIRIT OF FERMENT

The three-day 50th Anniversary was over in March, 1902. The membership of Central Church, seven hundred and fifty strong, had paused to confer together, to take account of stock, to review their half-century of church life, and to give thought to the future.

They saw themselves soundly established as a vigorous and congenial center of religious leadership in the heart of a growing community of high-minded and forward-looking people. As to tangible assets they were housed in a substantial and beautiful church building with its adjoining Memorial Chapel, they were actively supporting the Portuguese Mission at Fox Point, and they were contributing

substantial sums of money for work in foreign missions (to seven organizations), in home missions (twenty organizations and individuals) and for aid to some twenty-four local charitable projects. And they were now free from debt.

As to intangible assets the men and women of the church, young and old, were giving themselves in many personal ways. Volunteer teachers served the Sunday School; its sessions were averaging one hundred fifty in attendance. Committees were active in a varied program of church and community work and social service: classes and clubs among the Fox Point Portuguese; a foreign missions committee of men, one of women; a women's sewing circle for a dozen home mission projects; a YMCA committee; a men's civic club of 90 members; the Marsh Paper Mission distributing magazines and books to the mariners of the New England coast; committees on ushers, flowers, care of the buildings, and aid to the needy.

Leadership was thus distributed broadly throughout the people of the parish. Supervision of the executive management of the church and the "Society", which was the corporate owner of the property, was allotted to the Standing Committee, chosen each year to be the organization's stalwart board of directors.

And underneath these visible activities there flowed a deep and steady undercurrent of devotion quietly broadening its influence as the beautiful church services drew more and more people of the busy city to join the reverent family circle of Central Church in its worship of God.

All in all Central Church stood well up on the splendid

list of Congregational churches of New England. Here indeed was an attractive field of work for a new minister who should be asked to take the leadership.

All that Spring and Summer of 1902 Central Church explored the field of Congregational ministers in search of a successor to Dr. Moore. In October the committee was prepared to report, a church meeting was called, and an invitation was authorized to be formally tendered to the Rev. Henry Evertson Cobb, D.D., of the West End Collegiate Church of New York City. Two weeks later came a call for another meeting of the church to hear Dr. Cobb's response; his letter was dated November 10, 1902.

It was my full purpose [wrote Dr. Cobb] to come to you and I so informed your committee. Since that purpose was formed however certain disastrous and far-reaching consequences which I could not foresee and which are indeed unprecedented and peculiar to this field have made it clear that it is my duty to remain in my present charge.

Dr. Cobb's "regrets" were never explained. Two months later the committee recommended that the Church call the Rev. Edward F. Sanderson of the Washington Street Congregational Church of Beverly, Massachusetts. The committee stated that they

were all united in their estimate . . . a man of strong personality, pleasing in manner, a good speaker and preacher with a fine voice and delivery, of good ancestry, a graduate of Amherst College and Hartford Theological Seminary.

Mr. Sanderson's acceptance came promptly; it was in

January, 1903. In his letter the young minister voiced his ambitions for his new charge; his ideals were high and his spirit dynamic.

My heart's desire [he wrote] is that Central Church may be a temple of communion with the Living God, a refuge for the heartsick, a school for instruction in Christian discipleship, that it may be a fountain of inspiration for this life and a gateway unto the life which is to come.

Call for a Council of the Rhode Island Churches was issued jointly by committees of the Church and the Society. The Council convened on the afternoon of Tuesday, April 28, 1903; ministers and delegates from all over the state were in attendance, and felicitations to Central Church and its new minister were hearty. From many of the neighboring churches came particular words of welcome; the Rev. Asbury Krom spoke for "Round Top," the Rev. Wallace Nutting for Union Church, and the Rev. J. J. Wooley for Pawtucket's Park Place. President George Harris of Amherst and President W. H. P. Faunce of Brown presented their eloquent congratulations.

That evening came the installation. The Church was filled, the program was noteworthy. Dr. James C. Vose, pastor emeritus of Beneficent Church, led the service. President Faunce, Mr. Nutting, and Dr. Moore, then of the Harvard Divinity School faculty, made moving addresses. Loyalty and interest overflowed from the church membership out into the community, and the installation was a

memorable event. The new minister, thus warmly welcomed, was a young man of thirty, magnetic, handsome, unmarried, and abounding in energy. His appreciation for his new church was keen. As he told his congregation a few months later at his first annual meeting, "This church is a great working church, it is like a great heart pumping out life all the time".

A great working church it was indeed. The busy groups of men and women that had so impressed the new minister continued their tasks with faithful zeal. Some 550 families made up the church membership of well over 750 persons; the church building and Memorial Chapel grew steadily in usefulness and importance as a center of East Side religious life. New projects were added: the young women formed a new Social Service League with 37 members; the Knights of King Arthur, formed in 1904, was a lively experiment in chivalry for the boys of the congregation; Mr. Sanderson held literary evenings when an interested group read and discussed poetry and drama.

Reaching out beyond its own borders in Diman Place, the Church was steadily increasing its responsibilities in wider fields. To local charitable projects it contributed some \$5,000; the list began with the important Portuguese Mission and included 28 organizations as beneficiaries. The ladies of the church were particularly busy with work for home missions; in addition to clothing and supplies, \$4,500 was devoted to helping a list of poorly-off communities. To foreign missionary fields \$4,000 was allotted; the list included a mission at Chihuahua, Mexico, Dr. Grenfell's

Hospital in Labrador where Miss Jessie Luther had organized its handicraft classes, Dr. Humes' church in Bombay, and a dozen other causes.

The year after Mr. Sanderson came, the Society built for the Portuguese Mission a new brick chapel on Sheldon Street to replace the old Transit Street quarters. The chapel was dedicated with general congratulations to "Missionary" Manuel R. Martin and to the Mission's hard-working executive committee: The Rev. Fred B. Hill, Central's assistant minister, Mr. Frederic H. Fuller, Mr. Charles W. Bubier, Mrs. Franklin J. Sawtelle, Miss Ruth A. Haskell, and Mrs. William MacDonald. For the finance committee Mr. Francis W. Carpenter reported that \$9,282 had already been raised by contributions to pay for the new chapel, besides which the church had appropriated some \$3,000.

Sunday morning services in the beautiful church edifice were a growing attraction. It was before the days of free pews, but the pew owners cordially shared with all comers. The music, supervised by Mr. John H. Mason and under Miss Helen Hogan's skilful and devoted direction, was notably excellent. And, to crown it all, Mr. Sanderson's engaging sermons were warm with spiritual feeling and appeal. To attend Central on a Sabbath morning was a social event; frock coats and silk hats were plentiful, and the insidious automobile was not yet in the peaceful scene. Central was a community institution; many Brown students made it their "church away from home", visitors in goodly numbers availed themselves of a sure welcome and the pews were well filled.

THE RESCUE MISSION

In the downtown center of Providence, within a stone's throw of the old Central Police Station, there was in the early 1900's a rescue mission for unfortunates. The Mission had its headquarters in an ancient wooden structure that had been the home of some well-to-do family in the days when Fountain Street was a residential section. It was known variously as the Fountain Street Mission, the Rescue Mission, the Ministry to the Unfortunate, and in later years its successor, Church House, had its own brick building on Wickenden Street. The threefold purpose of the Mission was "care of discharged prisoners, care of fallen women, and care of their children".

When Mr. Sanderson came to Central Church the Fountain Street Mission was under the charge of the Rev. Frank H. Decker, a former Congregational minister. Money to support the Mission was contributed by various individual donors and churches.

Mr. Sanderson became greatly interested in this "ministry to the unfortunate" and gradually devoted increasing energy to it. Mr. Decker was active day and night; money was needed, and he was an untiring special pleader for the unfortunates and their rescue.

The first official notice of the participation of Central Church in the responsibilities of conducting the Mission appears in the records of the Church under date of December 5, 1907. On that evening the church was called "to discuss the matter of appointing a minister for the Fountain Street Mission".

There is no report as to Mr. Sanderson's presentation of the Mission's problem or of any discussion thereon, but some light is shed by a statement made a few weeks later when Mr. Sanderson told the church that the Mission's need of increased financial support had become imperative. At all events the church meeting took formal action:

By vote of the church the pastor was empowered to engage a minister to undertake work among the unfortunate, said minister to be responsible to the pastor and the pastor to be responsible to the Church for his work. That the pastor be given the privilege of raising funds for this work and of assuming the financial responsibility for the same.

Mr. Sanderson was now deeply involved in Fountain Street. He had won consent of the church for a full-time minister and on the front page of the church calendar, following the names of Mr. Sanderson, minister, and Mr. Fred B. Hill, assistant, was added, "Rev. Frank H. Decker, assistant minister in charge of the Fountain Street Mission". And Mr. Sanderson not only appealed to the congregation for funds but joined Mr. Decker in seeking money from downtown men of affairs.

But the situation was an awkward one. The church vote giving its pastor the privilege of assuming the financial responsibility for the running of the Mission created a dual allegiance. The task was a heavy one even for a man of the abounding energy and zeal of Mr. Sanderson. He appealed to the congregation, and several hundred dollars was subscribed. But much more was needed.

Three months went by and the Mission's finances were ebbing. A business meeting of the church was called "to

consider plans for the ministry to the unfortunate". Mr. Sanderson addressed the meeting. He described the work of the Mission embracing its three-fold objective, "care of the discharged prisoners, care of fallen women, and care of their children". He voiced his conviction of its importance and said that "some definite plan was imperative for its continuance".

An earnest discussion followed. The problem was a serious one. Everyone was in sympathy with the motives of the pastor, everyone approved financial contribution to the Mission's work. Adoption of full responsibility, which would include rent, salary of minister in charge, running expenses, and assumption of a project admittedly expanding in cost, called for sober consideration; the decision would be a vital one for the welfare of Central Church. Participating in the discussion were many of the active leaders in church work: Messrs. Seeber Edwards, Fairchild, Fuller, Jackson, Hunt, Torrey, Miss Bancroft and Mrs. Jackson. It was finally voted that the ministry to the unfortunate be referred to the Standing Committee for an early report. The meeting closed by voting that "the Church desires to express its sympathy in this movement and with the hope that means may be found for its enlargement". A week later the Standing Committee brought in its report.

The Question of Ministry to the Unfortunate.

The Committee deems it wise for the immediate future to develop that work only along present lines. To this end we recommend that the matter of renting and equipping quarters adequate to immediate needs be entrusted to a committee consisting of Mr. Sanderson and three members to be chosen by the Church.

The Church meeting accepted the report, and to serve on the committee with Mr. Sanderson they chose Messrs. Frederic H. Fuller, Frederick H. Jackson and Arthur W. Fairchild.

It was on a Thursday evening late in March, 1908, that the Church accepted the report. The summer went by. Mr. Sanderson went to Europe, returning in September. Autumn activities began, people were returning from vacation, the pews began to fill up again. So far as the attentive Sunday morning congregations were aware, Central Church was pursuing its widening path of community usefulness in perfect harmony. Few knew of the seriousness of the problem of the Fountain Street Mission.

On his return from Europe Mr. Sanderson told the Standing Committee of his unabated desire that the Church adopt the Mission. The Committee, called together for a special meeting on September 28, 1908, weighed the problem. Two of the committee were for proceeding with the task as proposed by Mr. Sanderson. But the majority of eight felt that the burden would at that time be an unwise one for the church to assume.

The decision of the majority of the Standing Committee was a serious blow to the plans which Mr. Sanderson envisaged for the Mission. The issue was now clearly drawn. Could the minister yield to what he believed to be a wrong decision of the committee, was the decision final, should he in the face of the committee's advice against it make a direct appeal to the Church and congregation? These questions formed the young minister's personal problem.

On a crisp October Sunday morning, two weeks after the meeting of the Standing Committee, Mr. Sanderson preached to a good-sized audience, and at the close of the sermon he read his resignation. The congregation was taken completely by surprise. He explained at length his reasons:

At a special meeting of the Standing Committee on September 28 [he said] eight members of the Committee gave their opinion that the retention of the Rescue Mission on Fountain Street as an integral part of the work of Central Church was neither practicable nor desirable. Without committing the Church they informally expressed their conviction that this work ought not to be continued for another year in its present relation to our organization.

This opinion I find myself unable to share . . . My conviction remains unshaken that such a work as this Church voted to sustain here is practicable and desirable.

In the light of the New Testament teaching there seems to me to be something unspeakably valuable and beautiful in the sympathetic union of a church of culture and of financial strength with the ignorance, the degradation and the poverty of the life of its own city. Should I as your minister consent to a withdrawal of our Church from the work which it has undertaken, after I have seen with my own eyes fruits which justify it, I should be sacrificing not an opinion merely but a deep and conscientious conviction. On the other hand it seems impossible to insist upon this conviction without disturbing the harmony which has ruled here in such unbroken beauty thro' many years.

My resignation becomes therefore the best possible course for both Church and minister and I hereby call a special meeting of the Church to be held in Memorial Chapel Wednesday evening, October 14 . . . I feel assured that you will continue the loyalty of the past by granting me now a generous release.

The audience listened to the resignation in shocked be-

wilderment. As the service ended, groups of the congregation gave hushed voice to their surprise and dismay. On Wednesday evening the whole membership filled Memorial Chapel. Mr. Sanderson did not attend. The Church clerk, Mr. James C. Kimball, called the meeting to order; Deacon Frederic Fuller was elected moderator. Mr. Fuller led in prayer and Mr. Kimball read the letter of resignation.

Details of the meeting appear rather fully in the book of Church records kept by Clerk Kimball. They give a picture of warm but for the most part courteous discussion. The unprecedented possibility of a rift in Central Church hovered over the meeting.

The Standing Committee took the brunt of the discussion. Criticism of later days, that the committee "ran everything" was not voiced. Two of the committee believed that Mr. Sanderson could successfully carry out his enlarged program for the mission, that the people of the Church and perhaps a wider group would rally to produce the money needed. Eight men of the Committee stood for a realistic continuance of the current program of aid to the mission but felt that adoption of financial guarantee of the greater project—rent, minister in charge, and running expenses—was an unwise leap for the Church to take.

Mr. Horatio B. Knox, Superintendent of the Sunday School, represented the view of the minority who favored all-out support of the mission. He explained his position thus: "I am heartily in accord with Mr. Sanderson's views and work at the Fountain Street Mission. It has been exceedingly difficult for me to have to differ from others

of the committee.” He then offered a resolution paying warm tribute to Mr. Sanderson and accepting the resignation “only because of the final and absolute character of the request”.

Mr. Arthur Fairchild seconded the resolution. He was of the majority of the committee and had had the experience of serving with Mr. Sanderson on the group to rent and equip quarters for the mission.

I wish to express my regret at differing from Mr. Knox [he said] but I do not feel that wisdom justifies continuance of this work now. I am a great friend of Mr. Sanderson. I love that man, and his resignation came to me like a bolt out of the clear sky.

Speaking for the mission committee itself, Mr. Fairchild told how he and Mr. Fuller “had spent much time looking at property to lease, but nothing suitable could be found without great expense for alterations”. They finally secured the present quarters on Fountain Street at a rental of \$1000 a year, this being half the \$2000 appropriated.

Before Mr. Sanderson went abroad, [he continued] the problem presented itself as to how funds should be raised to carry on during the summer. Mr. Sanderson had made a plea from the pulpit for a fund of \$1600. Of that sum only \$300 was pledged. . . . Already the work has cost over \$4000; will naturally expand; it seemed unwise to try at this time to carry on the work.

Mr. Knox spoke again:

There never has been any attempt, in or out of the committee, to badger Mr. Sanderson, never a criticism of him or a hard word to him. In advice given it has been with the honest desire to act for the best interest of the Church. It seems the right thing to give Mr. Sanderson the release he requests.

Professor William MacDonald took the floor. He was professor of history at Brown, having come to Providence from Maine the year before Mr. Sanderson was called.

Mr. Sanderson has asked me to speak for him [he said]. But first [as Clerk Kimball's records narrate] he wanted to say a word as a member of the Church. The matter of the Rescue Mission was not the only cause of Mr. Sanderson's resignation. Ever since Mr. Sanderson came, certain people have been working against him to try to drive him out. The important thing is are we going to allow our minister freedom of speech in the pulpit. . . . Mr. Sanderson offered to stand responsible for the financial part in case the Church failed in it; . . . he offered, if this project caused a falling off in the benevolences, to make up the deficit. The Standing Committee voted it down.

Professor MacDonald asserted that it would be cold-blooded to adopt Mr. Knox's resolution accepting Mr. Sanderson's resignation. He proposed that a committee of five wait on Mr. Sanderson with a request to reconsider, that meantime the Standing Committee be directed to continue the work at Fountain Street as at present, and that another committee of five be appointed to investigate the work at Fountain Street and report to the Church.

This vote was passed and Moderator Fuller appointed the two committees: To wait on Mr. Sanderson, Professor MacDonald with Professor J. Irving Manatt, Mr. Irving O. Hunt, Mr. Knox and Mr. Fairchild; to investigate the work at Fountain Street, Mr. Walter G. Brown with Mr. Charles H. Philbrick, Mrs. Ralph C. Watrous, Mr. Charles R. Makepeace, and Mr. William B. Greenough.

No time was wasted; three evenings later the Church met

again and heard Mr. Sanderson's response—that he felt he must adhere to his decision to leave.

In this letter of final decision, copied in full in the record book of the Church, the reader of today looks back forty years and more with a feeling of respect and sadness. The powerful call of a deep missionary zeal to exalt the work of the rescue mission struggled with the young minister's affection for his Church.

I desire to express [he wrote] my appreciation of the request that I reconsider the question of my resignation. . . . The main issue on which this Church is divided ought, in order to secure clearer comprehension, to be restated. . . . In a word it is this: Is the maintenance of a rescue Mission for the poor and degraded of its own city the kind of work in which Central Church should engage? The financial consideration does not in any way enter into the problem. . . . I agreed to incur no debts. . . . I have received offers of help from three business men, members of this congregation but not of the Church, as would equal half the amount necessary for another year. . . . My main contention that such work as this is legitimately within the sphere of a Christian Church has but echoed the opinion of many men of international reputation. . . .

I have been asked why I should make a matter of conscience out of what seems to be a mere question of business judgment. It is because I believe the roots go deeper than any mere business proposition. . . . It vitally concerns the whole future of the Christian church.

I saw in imagination a great church, carrying on its mission work at home and abroad, meeting our foreign problem among the Portuguese in Providence, enjoying its well-ordered life in a beautiful building with a deeper satisfaction because it had provided an open door for the sinful, neglected and unfortunate who claim citizenship with us in our own city.

I am not unmindful of the sympathy and support so earnestly and freely offered in these past days. I am profoundly touched by it and grateful for it, and I thank you from my heart for the request which you have made and all of the kindness and affection which it has implied, but I feel that the outcome is inevitable. . . . I feel that I must adhere to my original decision.

Thus the resignation became an accepted fact.

The episode of the Fountain Street Mission left surprisingly little of bitterness in its wake. Loyalty to Central Church was deeply rooted in the hearts of an enlightened Christian membership and differences of opinion did not lessen the respect, one toward another, that was to be expected within a devoted group of broadminded people. Regrets there were on both sides—regrets that persisted and were to call for great tact and sympathy from Dr. Atkins and Dr. Bradford in their following ministries. But from the emotional experience, unpleasant as it might be, there grew a deeper loyalty.

Mr. Sanderson had the affection and respect of all. If the majority of the parish thought it unwise for the Church to adopt the Mission, the question uppermost for all was what was best for the Church.

Thus the people of the parish pondered, searched their hearts for the answer, made their decision, and turned their faces to the future with renewed thoughtfulness. It was an experience that tried men's souls, and because of it they gained humility and strength.

THE MINISTRY OF SCHOLARSHIP

During the months of spiritual ferment over the Fountain

Street Mission many leaders in the denomination of Congregational churches of the country turned sympathetic and anxious thoughts toward Central Church. One such leader was the minister of the First Congregational Church of Detroit, Michigan, Dr. Gaius Glenn Atkins.

Dr. Atkins was a man of outstanding reputation and conspicuous attainment. A graduate of Ohio State University in 1888 he had studied law at the Cincinnati Law School and earned an LL.B in 1891. A little later he studied at Yale Divinity School, and in 1895 he was ordained a Congregational minister. His first ministry was at Greenfield, Massachusetts. Here he spent five years, and then went to Burlington, Vermont. In 1904 he was given a D.D. by the University of Vermont; in 1906 Dartmouth College added its D.D., and that year he was called to the church at Detroit. He was 42, married, with five children, and he liked New England.

Professor J. Irving Manatt, the distinguished Greek scholar who was the head of that department at Brown University, was chairman of the committee to choose a new minister for Central Church. The committee brought in their recommendation to invite Dr. Atkins to come to Central; the church vote was unanimous, and Dr. Atkins accepted under date of October 11, 1909.

I have felt from the first [he wrote] that the service to which you ask me was, in its implications, its actualities and its possibilities most distinctly the work I am best fitted to do. I shall come to you then with a deep eagerness and joy, and, I trust, in a right humility.

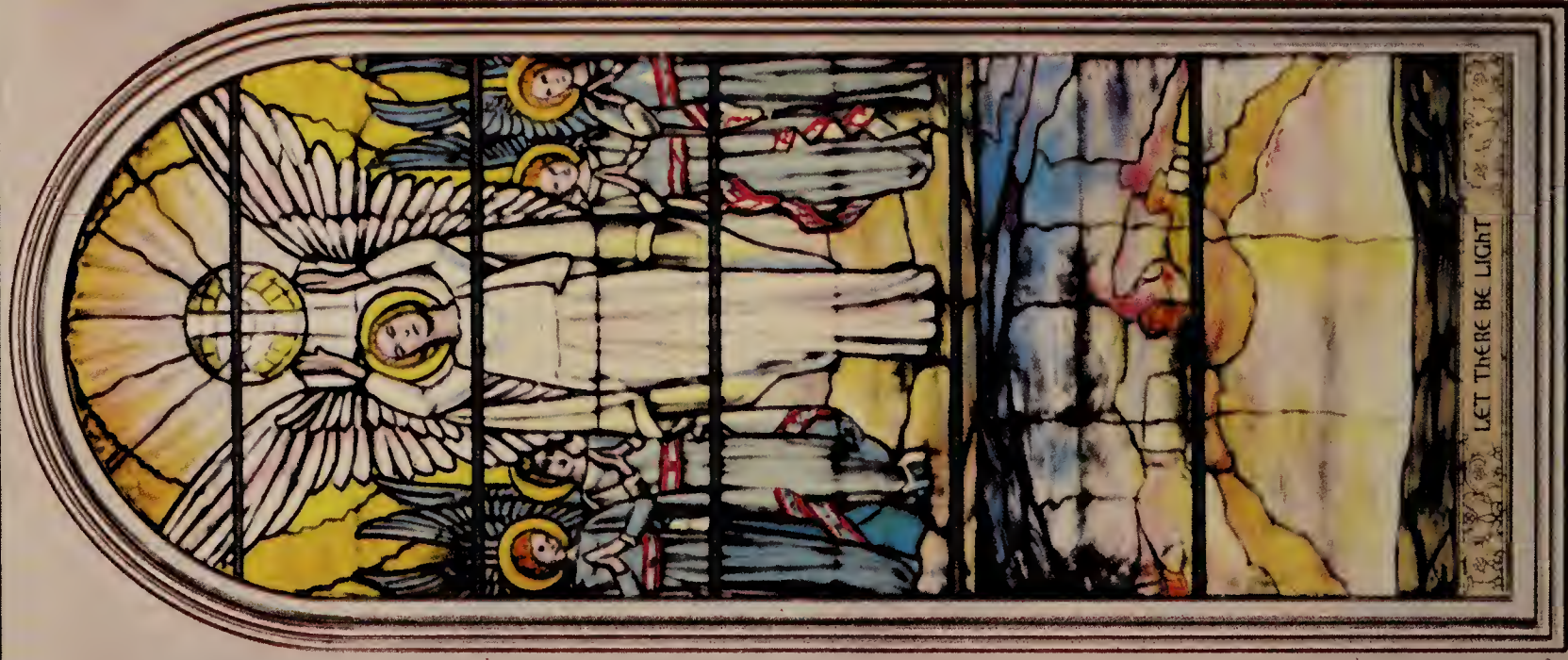
Dr. Atkins put it well; he was fitted for Central Church. And he might have said that Central Church was fitted for

Continued on page 57

THE PLAN OF THE WINDOWS

DURING the pastorate of the Rev. Edward F. Sanderson, and at the suggestion of Professor Adelaide Locke of Wellesley College, a plan was adopted to insure in advance harmony and unity in the preparation of the stained glass windows which might presently be given as memorials.

The central theme of the windows is the unfolding of divine life in the universe. Thus, the Window of Light on the wall of the East Transept, the gift of the children of Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Clark Sayles, and the Window of the Heavenly City, directly opposite on the west wall, the gift of Mr. Francis W. Carpenter, together symbolize the beginning and the culmination of Christian endeavor. Six smaller windows represent the great forces of the universe through which the purpose of the Church may be fulfilled. Commencing with the window on the north wall of the West Transept, and moving around the Church toward the right, the windows may be identified as follows: the Window of Prayer, the gift of Mr. Arthur Claflin and Mr. George Claflin, in memory of Mr. and Mrs. George Lyman Claflin; the Window of Labor, on the north side of the East Transept, the gift of the children of Mr. and Mrs. Henry W. Wilkinson; the Window of Prophecy, on the south side of the East Transept, the gift of Mrs. Harriet N. Lathrop, in tribute to the women who have made of this a missionary Church; the Window of Loyalty and Sacrifice, on the east wall of the Nave, the gift of the people of the Church as a memorial to those who served in the First World War; the Window of Love, on the west side of the Nave, the gift of Mrs. Robert W. Burbank and Mr. Caleb Burbank, in memory of Mr. Robert W. Burbank; and the Window of Faith, on the south side of the West Transept, the gift of Mrs. Eliza N. Viall, in memory of Mr. Richmond Viall.



The window of Light, on the wall of the East transept the gift of the children of Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Clark Sayles

him. The scholarly character of the man, deeply devotional and of broad erudition seasoned by pastoral experience, found a congenial and responsive fellowship in a church of thoughtful people. Central Church shared widely in the resources of a richly cultural city. Providence, Rhode Island, possessed of unique religious traditions, was, and is, rich in the sort of life in which strong churches are nourished. In this environment, enriched by a great university, by strong schools and colleges and libraries, a vigorous and hungry culture thrived among the men and women of the professions, of business, of public office, of social life. Such a culture called for spiritual leadership of high order. In that environment Central Church developed its character. For that environment the Church sought, consciously or unconsciously to embody on a high spiritual level the aspirations of the community.

During Dr. Atkins' seven years the Church steadfastly deepened its roots in consecration and service. Those years were troubled by the storms of war; in 1914 Europe was aflame, in 1917 a million and three-quarters of American soldiers fought in France. Many families of the parish were directly touched. These were years of restless anxiety.

At the heart of our American life [Dr. Atkins wrote in his 1915 Carnegie Church Peace Union Prize Essay] is the American Church; free from entangling alliances with the State and its parties, with no cause to serve save the causes of ultimate justice and regnant righteousness. . . . she has leadership, power, influence to feed into the life of this nation an idealism which shall cast its light far down the future's broadening way and make plain the path along which the peoples shall come.

Within his own Church Dr. Atkins' leadership was gentle, but it had effectiveness born of wise thinking. The activities of a great working church that had so impressed Mr. Sanderson flowed on. The roll of members continued its growth; on Dr. Atkins' coming it numbered 866, when he left to go back to Detroit it was 910.

His sermons were noteworthy; they radiated a broad human philosophy that appealed to intellect and heart alike. They had literary charm and they had the pepper and salt that came from mature training in pastoral work among a variety of congregations.

Dr. Atkins had written much before he came to Providence, but his first published book appeared during his first year at Central. Thereafter, at intervals of two years or so came a series of books that grew to a list of at least twenty-one volumes. Four of these were published during his Providence ministry. On rereading these books one is impressed by their breadth of thought and a certain pungent flavor of authority despite the variety of subject. The \$1,000 prize essay was an ably written peace polemic, fearless and realistic. *Pilgrims of the Lonely Road*, published in 1913, portrayed the quest for strength and peace as revealed in a handful of "Books of the Spirit" written by famous men. One passage from the *Pilgrims* is here repeated:

Life does not grow more simple with the passing years, but its deeper needs are unchanging. The secret of peace is not to be sought at the end of the road, but in the spirit in which we journey.

All in all these books are important; they are the crea-

tive flowering of a scholarly religious philosopher, tolerantly critical, often delightfully discerning, always clear and inspiring.

When those volumes that were published during Dr. Atkins' ministry at Central appeared, the people of the Church not only read them with keen interest but were proud to be thus emphasized as a "literary" church.

Dr. Atkins spent six busy and happy years at Central, resigning in 1917 to go back to Detroit again. That busy city, prospering mightily, felt that it needed him; his old church called and he returned for a second pastorate of ten years.

Dr. Atkins' ministry at Central came to its end with abiding respect and affection between pastor and people. He had been a scholarly and inspiring leader to his parish, and the city as well as the Church appreciated how much the richer it was for his stay.

[Mr. Sanderson lives in quiet retirement on the Island of Nantucket. Dr. Atkins lives at Long Beach, New York, where he continues his writing and has been editor of the *Ministers' Quarterly* for several years.]

TRANSITION

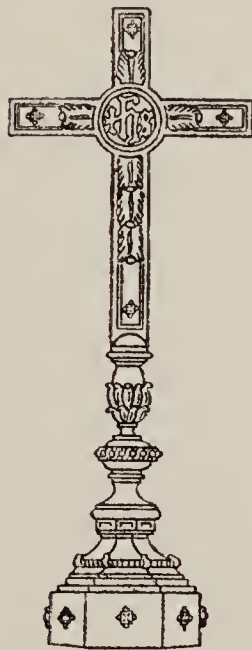
CENTRAL Church has been served by distinguished leaders. Austerity, religious conviction, liberalism, scholarship, social consciousness, pastoral responsibility—these and every other term appropriate to the Christian ministry applied in various ways to the ministers who had contributed to the growth and strength of the church through more than sixty years of its existence. And now the responsibility again devolved on the lay leadership to chart the course of the future and to select the man who should guide a church that had become respected throughout New England for its solidity and vitality.

It was well that the committee consisted of men whose judgment and belief were sound, for the choice that they were destined to make was to determine the leadership for a third of a century, a longer period than any man had hitherto served as minister. It was in no mood of petty pride, with no thought of surpassing the qualities of earlier ministers, with no intent to court popular acclaim, that they turned to their difficult and responsible task. It was rather their settled purpose to find the man whose training and character, whose personal conviction and domestic tranquillity, whose scholarship and pastoral devotion might combine to serve best the men and women who looked to Central Congregational Church for spiritual comfort. The choice that they ultimately made was to carry the church with increasing power to the observance of the one hundredth anniversary of its founding.

It is fitting that this part of the story should be told by Mr. Gurney Edwards, whose family connections reach far back into the middle years of the Church's history and whose personal association covers closely and intimately the entire period of the pastorate of the Rev. Arthur H. Bradford.

PART IV
HERE WE STAND
1918-1952

By GURNEY EDWARDS



HERE WE STAND

ON the morning of June 2, 1918, when a blue sky and a bright sun made the East Side of Providence appear at its best, Dr. Arthur H. Bradford preached his first sermon as minister of Central Congregational Church. A casual observer of the city would have quite readily supposed (apart from the presence of a few military and naval uniforms about the streets) that heaven and earth were fairly attuned on that day. But overseas the fury of the German offensive had not yet abated in a war that happily ended months earlier than anyone would have anticipated on that June day.

In the thirty-four years that have followed, Dr. Bradford has attained a notable success as the minister of the church; the membership has more than doubled (from 910 in 1919 to 2050 as it stands now); earlier rifts in the Congregation have long since been healed; large congregations weekly hear his sermons. His wise administration of the church, his Christian example and his sympathetic ministering to its needs have won for him the universal love and respect of the congregation and also of the whole community.

But somehow that June day of 1918 remains symbolic for the thirty-four years that have followed in the life of Central Congregational Church. The Church itself, situated in a pleasant but rather static residential district, has grown strong and unified. But the background of the thirty-four years around the nation and the world has been one of storm and stress, a First World War, the peace of which was squandered, a tinsel and speculative prosperity in this country

following the war, a consequent cruel and devastating depression, relieved largely by expenditures for a new war, the Second World War leaving problems more serious than those that it settled, and finally, the present time of trouble, the outcome of which no man knoweth.

The pulpit of the Church had been vacant since Dr. Gaius Glenn Atkins retired on September 23, 1917. Immediately after Dr. Atkins had tendered his resignation on May 10, 1917, the Standing Committee had voted to elect a Permanent Pastoral Supply Committee of five to collaborate with a corresponding committee of the Society to recommend a successor to Dr. Atkins. On the Church Committee were Messrs. Frederic H. Fuller, Theodore Collier, Mortimer H. Alling, Oscar L. Heltzen and Erling C. Ostby. The committee labored long and diligently and sought the very best minister that could be brought to the Church. By the following May they were of the opinion that they had succeeded in its mission. At the special meeting of the Church held on April 20, 1918, the joint committee unanimously recommended the Rev. Arthur H. Bradford, of Rutland, Vermont, as the new minister of the Church. To quote from the minutes of the meeting, "all of the members of the Committee spoke in terms of the highest praise of Dr. Bradford and Mr. Swan stated 'that he was their first, last and only choice,' ". The Church meeting unanimously voted to extend the call to Dr. Bradford "to become its pastor and teacher". Messrs. Fuller, Collier, and Ostby were appointed to meet with a similar committee of the Society to convey the action of the meeting to the pastor-elect. Dr. Bradford's letter ac-



The Window of the Heavenly City, on the wall of the West Transept the gift of Mr. Francis W. Carpenter

cepting the call was dated April 30, 1918. He wrote in part: "After earnestly seeking and striving to follow God's Guidance in the matter, I rejoice to accept your call subject to the action of the church which I now serve and the vote of an Ecclesiastical Council soon to be convened to dissolve my present pastoral relations."

The new minister had been graduated from Yale in 1905, had done post-graduate work there in 1906, and had been graduated from Union Theological Seminary in 1909. He had been assistant pastor in the South Church of Springfield, Massachusetts, for three years, and had served the Congregational Church in Rutland for five more years. His father, the Rev. Amory Howe Bradford, had long been one of the leaders in the Congregational denomination.

An Ecclesiastical Council was called for October 15, 1918 for the installation of the new minister. The epidemic of influenza that was raging about this time in the cities and military cantonments of the country forced a postponement until December 2, 1918. A note in the calendar for October 26 stated that in compliance with the request of the Board of Health all church services for the week would be omitted.

At the installation services, eminent Congregational Ministers participated. Dean Charles R. Brown of the Yale School of Religion preached the sermon, Dr. Nehemiah Boynton gave the charge to the new pastor, and Dr. Edward C. Moore, formerly minister of the Church, gave the charge to the people. At the social gathering following the installation, at which Mr. Frank H. Swan presided, speakers included President William H. P. Faunce of Brown Univer-

sity, Dr. Sturges of Grace Church, Dr. Lord of the First Congregational Church, and Rev. Charles S. Mills of Montclair.

The installation occurred three weeks to a day after the Armistice in the First World War had been signed. Sixty-eight men of the Church whose names now appear on the tablet on its east wall, had served in the Army and Navy during the War. Alfred Christenson Butts and Harold Harrison Heltzen, two of the number, had died in the service of their country.

Most important organizational changes were to occur in Central Congregational Church in the next few years. The annual meeting of the church was changed from January to May in 1919. The Church, like so many other Congregational Churches of the day, had a dual organization. There was the unincorporated Church consisting of the members of the Church as an ecclesiastical body and the incorporated Society that owned the property of the Church. The members of the Society were the pew renters whose pew rentals paid the minister's salary, provided for the music of the services and the upkeep and maintenance of the Church properties. The Music Committee and the Building and Grounds Committee were then Committees of the Society. The benevolences of the Church members provided for the missionary responsibilities of the Church. In accordance apparently with sound tradition, the members of the Society were solely of the male sex.

The increased size of the weekly congregations that attended services after Dr. Bradford's arrival was soon to put a strain on the system of rented pews. It was embar-

rassing to keep worshippers waiting for seats while rented pews remained empty. Repeated notices in the calendar in 1920 urging pew holders to notify the Church office when they could not be present presaged a change in the order of events. Finally, at the annual meeting of the Church held on May 10, 1920 it was voted that the Church select a committee of three and request the Society to appoint a committee of like number, the two committees with the minister to constitute a joint committee to study the present business organization of the Church and Society in relation to current conditions with a special reference to the possible advisability of instituting a free pew system. Mr. Arthur W. Fairchild, Mrs. Theodore P. Bogert, and Mr. Edward A. Stockwell were named members of the Church committee. At the next annual meeting Dr. Bradford reported progress and the Committee was continued.

At a special meeting of the Church called further to consider the subject held on December 15, 1921 the report of the Society and the Church committee, both favoring the establishment of free pews, was given. Detailed arguments were set forth: Members of the congregation would get better acquainted if they sat in different seats, new members cannot always find a pew to rent, the free pew system had worked well elsewhere, the choice of pews was largely determined by financial ability, the large family is penalized by the system, the responsibility of financial support for the Church is better appreciated by the congregation if it is not limited to pew renters, and a Church with free pews is better equipped for Christian service.

These arguments satisfied the members of the Church. The report of its committee was accepted and the Society was requested to take the necessary steps to establish a free pew system. On March 17, 1922 the necessary amendment of the charter of the Society was approved by the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island. This provided that in contemplation of the abolition of the rented pew system the Society could prescribe other qualifications (than pew renting) for membership in the Society. As a result it was from the class of contributors to the Church that new members were thenceforth chosen. Each annual meeting of the Society thereafter busied itself with the election of a long roster of new members of its organization from such contributors.

The abolition of rented pews had, however, overthrown the principal props for the dual system of Church organization. A few years later still another committee was set up to study plans for simplifying the organization of the Society and the Church. This committee reported at the annual meeting of the Church on May 13, 1929 and recommended that the Church become the sole operating organization and the Society become a mere holding organization, thus relinquishing its building and grounds committee and music committee. These would henceforth be Church Committees. The Church accepted the report. The Society readily acquiesced. The same individual was thereafter to serve as treasurer both of the Church and the Society and there would be only one budget. In February, 1930 each organization adopted appropriate by-laws to give effect to the changes.

This step was obviously the beginning of the end of the Society. Early in 1933 at a meeting of the Board of Deacons, the minister of the Church was authorized to appoint a Committee of Deacons to consider whether the plan of the organization of the Church was satisfactory. Out of this committee developed a joint committee of the Church and the Society to determine whether the Church and the Society should be merged. The Church Committee consisted of Professor James P. Adams, and Messrs. Kirk Smith and John H. Wells; the Society Committee of Messrs. Edward A. Stockwell, Colin MacR. Makepeace, and Gurney Edwards. As a result of the deliberations of this joint committee it was decided to recommend the merger of the Society and of the unincorporated Church. It was proposed that the name of the Society should be changed to Central Congregational Church, that there should be a single corporation comprehending both the spiritual and the temporal functions of the Church, that the members of the corporation would be the members of the Church and that whatever assets the unincorporated Church owned should be transferred to the corporation. Professor James P. Adams reported on the plan to the Church meeting, and Mr. Kirk Smith further explained the details of the proposal. The plan was approved and the details for carrying it out were authorized at meetings of the Society and Church held on April 19, 1934.

The last annual meeting of the old church was held on May 14, 1934. Immediately after the close of the meeting the clerk executed a bill of sale of all the property of the un-

incorporated Church to the corporation. Then followed the first annual meeting of the Church as a corporation.

Apart from changes incident to the merger contained in the new by-laws of the Church corporation, they also provided for a Prudential Committee (a name that long puzzled laymen), to manage the affairs of the Church in lieu of the old Standing Committee and the old Finance Committee.

Thus was completed the organization of the Church as we know it today. Much time and effort of the members of the Church and Society Committees were given to the fruition of the plan. No one today would go back to the cumbersome old organization.

At the annual meeting of the Church in 1936, important changes in the by-laws were adopted: A chairman of the Board of Deacons was to be named, there were to be joint meetings of the Prudential Committee and Board of Deacons, and, finally, definite terms of office were prescribed for most of the Committees of the Church and it was stated that it would be the policy of the Nominating Committee not to nominate persons to succeed themselves on committee assignments. Thus a much wider participation of church members on committees was assured. A by-law change adopted at the annual meeting in 1941 provided for a chairman of the Permanent Diaconate.

During all this period, from the time of Dr. Bradford's installation onward, new church committees other than those already mentioned were being organized and some old committees were disappearing. In January, 1919, the Sunday School Committee had become the Religious Education

Committee. A Missionary Committee was organized in 1925, a Flower Committee, which was henceforth to provide the beautiful floral decorations in the chancel and to distribute the flowers after the service to shut-ins, made its first report at the annual church meeting in 1927, a library committee was organized in the early 30's to maintain a book table in the rear of the church after Sunday service. A Social Action Committee designed to emphasize the relation of Christian ethics to political, social and economic problems was also organized in the early 30's. At the annual meeting in 1938 the church by-laws were amended to provide for a Church Calling Committee and an Executive Committee thereof, the services of which it was believed would better acquaint the minister with the needs of the parish and would assist with some of his pastoral duties.

On the other hand a Y.M.C.A. and a Y.W.C.A. Committee, which had operated at the beginning of the period, had ceased to exist; another casualty was the committee on the Ministering Children's League. The Church was proving both pliant and aggressive in its relation to changing circumstances.

So much for the changes in the organization of the Church. But mere organization does not of itself adequately express the innate religious and spiritual life of the Church. The worship program is a better barometer of that life. During the period from early October to the end of May, ever since the early days of Dr. Bradford's ministry, congregations averaging nearly five hundred persons have gathered for the Sunday morning services. A monthly staff

of ushers, organized by a head usher and his assistants, efficiently serve at the Sunday services. During the summer joint services have generally been arranged with other churches, sometimes with the Central Baptist Church, and of late years with a group of seven churches of different denominations meeting together in the First Baptist Meeting House. Special services during the year have come to have a particular significance in the religious life of the Church. The services of the Christmas season have become notable: the pageant, frequently held on the afternoon of the Second Sunday before Christmas, the candlelight service on the preceding Sunday afternoon with the family gathering for refreshments and sociability immediately afterwards.

A paragraph in the calendar for December 28, 1947, apparently in the minister's own words, contains a vivid description of the Christmas season in the Church.

"When we think of the Christmas season in our Church this year, how many things come to mind. Such things for example as these: the organ music at all the services . . . the Christmas Play 'Why the Chimes Rang', the reverent spirit in which it was given, the singing of the quartet, the chorus, the girls' choir, the beauty of the chancel . . . the great number who came that night, many of them at home from school and college, with so many children who had such a good time with Santa Claus."

Due to the large attendance at the Easter service two morning services were inaugurated for Easter in the early 1940's, an earlier service conducted by the Assistant Minister at which the attendance has always been good, and the

later 11 o'clock service thronged by a large congregation and conducted by Dr. Bradford. The masses of Easter lilies and other memorial flowers year after year on Easter Sunday have filled the Church with rare, vernal beauty. On some of the Palm Sunday afternoons during the thirties passion and other plays were given in the Church.

Nor are these services the only ones that have assumed significant places in the minds of the congregation. We think also of the family service at Thanksgiving, of the Children's Day service in May, with the exercises of promotion and the promise of growth and with the children's sermon in which Dr. Bradford is so ably assisted by the little blue boy, of the service of Dedication for Church School Teachers and Officers of the Church Ministry of Music, of the Communion Service on the evening of Holy Thursday, of the Wednesday evening Lenten Services, conducted by laymen as well as by clergymen, and of many others.

But fairness demands that in chronicling the history of the last thirty years, there should be recorded some decided losses in worship. Vesper services, common at the beginning of the period have all but been given up. The Thursday evening meetings (including the preparatory services before Communion which were always faithfully attended by the stauncher members of the Church and at which new members of the Church were voted upon) were discontinued in the early thirties. Even the average attendance at the morning service is now somewhat less despite a considerably larger Church membership than it was in the early twenties. For these losses no minister can be held responsible. They

result solely from the changing or rather more truly the lessening habits of worship of the Congregation.

An account of the worship and organization of the Church would be incomplete without a record of the Assistant Ministers and other religious leaders who have well served the Church. When Dr. Bradford came to the Church in 1918, the Rev. Mr. Frank E. Butler had then for seven years served the Church as Assistant Minister and Director of Religious Education. The position of Director of Religious Education had been a new one for the Church. But Mr. Butler brought to it proficiency and an eager religious and intellectual interest in the subject of religious education. For fourteen years his responsibility was to conduct the Church Sunday School which over the latter part of this period was rapidly expanding. Advancing age induced him in April, 1925, to submit his resignation, which was accepted at a Thursday evening meeting of the Church held on April 2, 1925. But a year later the Congregation, finding that he had occupied a place not easily filled, invited him to resume his service immediately as one of the Ministers of the Church. He continued to serve the Church actively as Associate Minister until November, 1936, when considerations of health and age again made it necessary for him to submit his resignation, which was accepted with regret on November 1, 1936.

The resolution accepting his resignation said among other things: "Although now past the allotted space of three score years and ten, one of the striking things about Mr. Butler is that he has always seen the hopes, the aspirations,

and the problems of boys and girls, the young men and women of Central Church, as one of them, because he never permitted himself to become old in spirit. Above all, he has helped so many young people to an understanding of religion and to an understanding of their relationship to God and the teachings of Jesus.”

Thereafter Mr. Butler was known as Associate Minister Emeritus and frequently appeared in the chancel of the Church at Communion and other services. He remained “eager in spirit” to the end of his life. His death at an advanced age in 1948 did not occur until more than ten years after his final resignation.

We have been blessed, too, at Central Church in the other Assistant Pastors and Directors of Religious Education who have worked with us, grown in stature, and in many cases moved on to other responsibilities. The Rev. Rudolph W. Roth served as Assistant Minister for the Church year 1925-1926, following Mr. Butler’s first withdrawal. After an interval he was succeeded by Mr. Paul S. McElroy, who came to us in 1932, and was ordained to the Christian Ministry at an Ecclesiastical Council held in our own Church on November 18, 1932. Two years later, in October, 1934, Mr. McElroy left to assume his own pastorate in Massachusetts, followed by the esteem and affection of the congregation.

At the annual meeting in 1936 the appointment of Miss Mary Frances Thelen as Director of Religious Education was announced. A brilliant person scholastically, she also served the Church for two years.

The new Assistant Minister of the Church, Bertrand Robert Crist, just out of Theological School, was ordained to the ministry in our church on October 26, 1938. After the entry of this country into the Second World War, he was granted leave of absence in October, 1942 to accept a commission as chaplain in the United States Naval Reserve. He was presently assigned to a ship and served for many months at advanced bases in the Pacific, and later as chaplain in charge of a large disciplinarian base in California. While in Australia he met his future wife. Extracts from "Bert" Crist's letters frequently appeared in the calendar. One told of his standing on a dock in San Pedro watching the transport that was bringing his wife for the first time to this country. During Dr. Bradford's serious illness in 1947, Bertrand Crist served with ability as the Acting Minister of the Church. During the latter days of his incumbency he was known as "Associate Minister". He finally left the Church in May, 1948, to accept the pastorate of a new Congregational Church in San Marino, California.

In May, 1945, to aid Dr. Bradford in Mr. Crist's absence it was announced that the Rev. Lewis L. Gilbert would serve as interim Associate Minister of the Church. A graduate of Yale Divinity School and a former American Board Missionary in China, he filled a notable place in the Church for two years and during that time the Gilbert family of six won a large place in the hearts of the people of Central Congregational Church. He was unable to return to China, as he had hoped, and afterward served in the State of Ohio Conference Ministry and has recently accepted a call to the

College Street Congregational Church in Burlington, Vermont.

During the war years Rev. Charles F. Rodrigues, the minister of the Portuguese Chapel, with his fine reading voice, frequently took part in the services of the Church.

Since 1943 Miss Ruth E. Cameron has served ably as Director of Religious Education. The Rev. Thomas H. Campbell, the former Associate Minister of the Church, commenced his work in January, 1949, and he, his wife and three children contributed much to the life of the Church.

Central Church has cause to rejoice in the character of those who have served through the Ministry of Music. One of the most notable of these was Miss Helen Hogan (later Mrs. Coome). She had been the organist for some years before Dr. Bradford came and had become a member of the Church on October 2, 1919. In her work as organist and as a founder in 1918 of the Girls' Choir, she contributed enthusiastically with her great musical ability and her warm and inspiring personality to the musical life of the Church. Girls, now women, who sang in the choir led by her, will never forget the debt that they owe to her leadership. She made frequent trips abroad to further her musical studies, and on one of these trips met her future husband, an Englishman, Mr. Coome. Her marriage necessitated her resignation as organist and choir director, but thereafter she remained in close touch with the Church, and occasionally prior to the Second World War returned on visits to this country. After that War started and London was incessantly bombed, she tirelessly labored at the expense of her own

health to help the stricken people of London and the vicinity, and to alleviate their wants with funds that the people of Central Church contributed. After the close of the War she sent to the Church a pendant designed by an artist who had been aided by her ministrations as a token of the appreciation of those who had been helped. This pendant now appears at the corner of the side aisle and the east transept.

After the departure of Mrs. Coome the Church was fortunate to have the services of Miss Frances Burnham, who filled the post of organist until 1943, and of Miss Elizabeth K. Bugbee, who now carries on the able tradition. One hesitates to write in detail of those who are still active in the Ministry of Music or have served recently, but it seems appropriate to say a word of two whose long association has given them a peculiar place in the affections of the Church. Of Miss Julia Gould, contralto soloist for twenty-six years, Dr. Bradford wrote on her retirement: "Now as the year draws to its close, we hope she realized how strong and deep is the affection of the peoples of the Church for her and how profoundly grateful we are for all that she has done for us. The many girls who were in the Girls' Choir when she was its Director will never forget the devoted leadership which she gave them. The hundreds of babies for whom she sang the Baptismal Chant may not have realized what they owe to her but their parents and friends blessed her for singing as she did."

And we recall also that Mr. Harry Hughes has sung, with only one interval since the start of Dr. Bradford's ministry. He is now the Director of the Youth Choir and in

addition to his generous contribution to the Sunday Services, he has time after time contributed by his singing to the pleasure of people attending meetings in Memorial Chapel.

As an essential part of its religious activities, Central Church has always been in the forefront of denominational support for both foreign and home missionaries in the field. In the calendar of November 4, 1928 it was announced that Central Church out of 5548 churches in the denomination stood 17th in amount and 12th in per capita giving. During the entire period of Dr. Bradford's ministry, the Church's missionary representatives have weekly been listed on the Church calendar. Among them have been in the foreign field: Reverend Paul L. Corbin, long located at Shansi, China, who was present at the annual meeting of the Church in 1929; Dr. Katherine Scott at Madura, India; Miss Alice Weir in South Africa; Miss G. Marion Holland and Miss Elizabeth Johnson, at Amednagor, India; Miss Florence Margaret Ridley, who on December 2, 1928 was commissioned at this Church to the Marathi Mission, India, and who occupied the pulpit of the Church on October 14, 1934; and the Rev. and Mrs. Robert W. Wood, who were likewise commissioned at a service in this Church on June 5, 1949 for service at Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan. In the home field: Miss Priscilla Chase of the Church Extension Board; Rev. William T. Holmes, President of Tougaloo College and a former Associate Minister of this Church; President Judson L. Cross and President Harold C. Warren, both of Tougaloo and Rev. Abram Nightingale of the Crossville (Tennessee) Congregational Church. A notable event

in Central Church's history was the holding of the annual meeting of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions in the Church on November 21-23, 1924.

It was during the latter part of this period that the Portuguese Chapel, long a favored project of Central Church and ably served by a succession of ministers, reached its maturity. The final goal of independence was marked at an Ecclesiastical Council on October 23, 1949, when the fruits of long years of effort culminated in the vote that established the Chapel as the Sheldon Street Congregational Church.

Although bricks and mortar admittedly do not make a Church, the enlargement of the Church properties along with the many intangible achievements during Dr. Bradford's ministry has been notable.

An amendment to the Corporate Charter in 1922 fixed the maximum value of property to be held at \$500,000; in 1929 at \$1,000,000.

At the time of the annual meeting in January, 1918, it was announced that two memorial windows had been completed during the year, the "Labor" window given in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Henry W. Wilkinson by their children, and the "Faith" window given in memory of Mr. Richmond Viall by his wife. By the fall of 1919 the remaining two memorial windows in the Church had been finished—the window "Prophet" given by Mrs. Harriet N. Lathrop in memory of the women who had helped to make this a Missionary church; and the "Sacrifice and Loyalty" window in memory of those from this Church who had lost their lives in service in the First World War and in honor of all others

from this Church who had served. A tablet containing the names of all men who had served in the armed forces had also been placed in the Church.

In April, 1922, the large Edwards residence on Stimson Avenue (owned by Mrs. Seeber Edwards, the widow of a former deacon of the Church) was acquired for a parsonage. This was later torn down to make room for the Church School Buildings. In May, 1925, the Church authorized the purchase of the property on Diman Place, known as the Watrous property (Mrs. Ralph C. Watrous being long head of the Social Committee) which is now used as a Church parsonage. The largest building project since the start of Dr. Bradford's ministry was the erection of the Church School and the remodelling of Memorial Chapel.

At the 74th annual meeting of the Church held on May 10, 1926, slides were shown of the tentative plans for the building project, and Deacon Frederic H. Fuller made a detailed statement. As usual the Church had to refer its desires to the Society, which was requested seriously to consider the need for the additions and to take such action in the premises as it should deem wise and practicable. The Society was not deaf to the request and promptly at its annual meeting held the next day appointed a committee to be known as the Committee on the Enlargement of the Church Plant. This Committee presented plans at the annual meeting in 1927 for a new Church School and for extensive remodelling of Memorial Hall at an estimated cost of \$300,000. The project was approved in 1928, and at the annual meeting in 1931, Mr. Stockwell reported that the Church School Building had

been completed and that plans for carrying out the remodeling of the Chapel were proceeding. At the annual meeting the following year the members assembled heard with satisfaction, if they did not already know it, that the building projects had been entirely completed.

The last important land acquisition to be made up to the present time was the purchase authorized at a special meeting of the Church held on February 11, 1945 of the property at Nos. 24 and 26 Diman Place, a part of which is now used as a residence for the Associate Minister. We recall also that the Carpenter estate immediately to the west of the church on Angell Street will ultimately become a part of our church property.

In the Book of Remembrance are recorded the gifts and memorials, rich in sentiment and devotion, that have been given by various individuals to the Church in past years. The beautiful memorial to those who lost their lives in the Second World War, was completed and dedicated in 1949.

The Church has at all times been able to enlist the aid of competent men of business who, without sacrifice of spiritual purpose, have devoted their wisdom and their energy to the necessary tasks of budgeting, appropriations, and canvasses. The latest major project has been the goal of \$100,000.00 with which to meet the challenge of the Centennial Celebration. For many years the widely spread activities of the Church, with its missionary enterprises and social services in addition to the expenses of the parish, have necessitated annual budgets well in excess of \$50,000.00. The skill with which these financial obligations have been handled in order

to maintain sound business practice and at the same time to cultivate a spirit of stewardship in giving, constitutes a monument to the wisdom and devotion of those who have served in this practical capacity.

The increasing financial scale of operation is, however, simply a barometer of the increased activity of the Church in its various branches of religious endeavor. We have grown familiar through the annual reports with the record of diverse Committee activities—the Sunday School, Youth Organizations, societies dedicated to social service and to fellowship, the Ministry of Flowers and of Music, the work of the Deacons and of the Prudential Committee, and of all the varied activities which make up the busy life of the Church. And we feel gratitude for the foresight of those who devised that wise system of rotation in office which assures a constantly widening participation of the men and women of the Congregation in the work of the Church.

It will be fitting also to recall the increasing service that the Church has been able to render to the community as a whole by extending its facilities to organizations not technically connected with the Church at all, such as units of the Red Cross which made use of Memorial Hall for a blood donation center during the Second World War, the Urban League, the World Affairs Council, and numerous agencies devoted to the collection of clothing for areas of the world, the most recent being Korea. Many of these activities, it is true, have no immediate relation to religious worship. But if people are to gather for wholesome and useful purposes, where better can they do so than within the four walls of a

Church edifice? We count it a privilege to dedicate our Church, with its large and beautiful physical plant, to all these services of mankind.

Some important events in the Church life occurring the last thirty-four years should be specifically mentioned. Among these was the observance in 1927 of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the Church, extending over a two-week period. It may be of interest to recall in brief summary the events of the celebration.

It began with anniversary services of the Church School on Sunday afternoon, March 6, 1927 at 4:30 o'clock, conducted by the boys and girls of the School. Addresses were given by Mr. Charles H. Philbrick, former Superintendent, and Mr. J. Harold Williams, the Superintendent at that time. On Thursday evening, March 10th, Deacon Frederic H. Fuller read an historical paper telling of the life of Central Church. On Sunday morning, March 13th, Dr. Bradford preached an appropriate sermon on the "Unseen Buildings of the Church". On Sunday afternoon a Communion service was conducted by Rev. Edward Caldwell Moore, a former pastor. On Monday evening, March 14, 1927 a community fellowship service was held. Greetings were conveyed by President W. H. P. Faunce of Brown University, Rabbi Samuel M. Gupp of the Temple Bethel, Dr. Richard D. Hollington of Mathewson Street Church, the Rev. Asbury Krom of Beneficent Congregational Church, the Rev. Augustus M. Lord of the First Congregational Church (Unitarian), and Bishop James DeWolfe Perry of the Episcopal Diocese. The service was followed by an

informal reception. On Wednesday evening a service was held at the Portuguese Chapel. Addresses were given by Rev. Albert Edward Roraback, who had been in charge of the work at the Chapel from 1905 to 1910, and by Rev. William Trumbull Holmes, Assistant Minister from 1897 to 1901. On Thursday evening there were fellowship services in the Church, followed by an informal reception, after which addresses were delivered by Rev. Charles W. Huntington, Rev. Edward C. Moore, Dr. Gaius Glenn Atkins, Prof. George F. Moore, Rev. John Jairus Walker, Assistant Minister of the Church from 1894 to 1896, Rev. William T. Holmes, Rev. Lawrence Riggs Howard, Assistant Minister in 1901 for six months, and Rev. Albert E. Roraback, all of whom had in the past been closely associated with the Church. On Sunday morning, March 20th, Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin preached. More than 900 were present and on that same evening the Seventy-fifth Anniversary Celebrations came to a close with a service of praise, remembrance, and consecration. During the period of the celebration an historical exhibit of pictures, programs, clippings and other material was on display.

Fresh in the memory of many today is the celebration of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Dr. Bradford's ministry observed on June 6, 1943. There was the morning service commemorating the anniversary at which the then Chairman of the Board of Deacons, Prof. Matthew C. Mitchell, and the then Chairman of the Prudential Committee, Mr. J. Coles Hegeman, took part to represent the laity of the Church. Who of those who were present on that occasion can forget

the reception to Dr. and Mrs. Bradford on the gorgeous June afternoon of the same day, to which throngs, waiting in queues, of the members of this Church and distinguished representatives of other churches came to attend in the Bradfords' honor? Who of those who attended can forget the scintillating remarks of the Chairman of the meeting that followed, Prof. Theodore Collier, of the permanent Diaconate, and the notable addresses of Vice-President Adams of Brown University representing the Church, and of the Honorable Joseph H. Gainer, former Mayor of Providence, and of Rabbi William G. Braude, the representatives of other great faiths?

Little enough has been said in the period of the history of Dr. Bradford's ministry of Dr. Bradford himself. In a very real sense the foregoing account of the achievements of the Church is an account of his own achievements as a Christian leader. But a few events of his own life should be related. He has received different honorary degrees—an M. A. from Yale in 1925, a D. D. from Brown in 1934, and an L. H. D. from Bryant College in 1951. He was named to the Yale Board of Trustees in 1925 and is now the senior Trustee. He was elected at the meeting of the General Council in 1940 to the Executive Committee of the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches and later served as Chairman of the Committee. He was in 1942 elected a member of the National Congregational Committee on War Victims and Services. In 1946 he was asked to be one of a small group of distinguished American Congregational clergymen who went abroad to visit and speak in the British

Congregational Churches immediately after the close of the War. He has recently been named a member of the very important National Committee of the Denomination on Polity and Unity. Withal Dr. and Mrs. Bradford have reared a splendid family of six children, Amory Howe, Jean Price, Benjamin, Stella, Arthur Howe, and James Allyn, and we rejoice in the knowledge that the family tradition of service in the Christian ministry is maintained in the present generation. It was a moving experience and a rare privilege to witness the ordination of the Rev. Benjamin Bradford in the church of his father.

The members of the Church, since it is a big church, are unfortunately not always as keenly aware as they might be of the denominational life of Congregational Christian Churches. The union of the Congregational and Christian Churches in 1931 caused hardly a ripple of recognition in the individual Congregational Churches because no vote on their part was taken. The proposed merger of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church was, however, put to a vote of the churches of the denomination. A panel discussion was held in Memorial Chapel to acquaint our people with the problems involved. Later at a special meeting on May 7, 1948, the members of this Church voted to support the merger 204-2. Unfortunately, litigation has blocked the consummation of the merger, but it is earnestly to be hoped that the difficulties can be surmounted, the merger effectuated, and the unity of the Christian Church thus furthered.

As one reads the calendars and the official records of the

Church it becomes evident that the background of the times receives little mention except in the war periods. At the close of the First World War a hastily arranged service on the afternoon of November 11, 1918 allowed the people of the Church to pour out their spontaneous thanksgiving for the end of that bloody conflict.

At a meeting of the Church held on January 30, 1919, it was voted that it was the sense of those present that the State Legislature be requested to ratify the Federal Prohibition Amendment. At a meeting on October 23, 1919 (the Church being less sure of itself) it was voted by a small majority (less than one-half of the members present voting) that the Legislature should be asked to rescind its vote instructing the Attorney General to contest the 18th Amendment.

A note in the calendar on June 8, 1924 reminded the congregation of the last day for voters registration. Another note on December 6, 1925 spoke of a mass meeting on behalf of the World Court. In April 22, 1945 a note in the calendar stated that "To-day we join with people throughout our country in prayer for God's blessing on the San Francisco Conference".

As a result of a decision of the General Council, the Social Action Committee conducted among the members of the Church a peace plebiscite on October 16, 1935 and in November, 1936 a plebiscite on Economic questions. From time to time the Committee has also conducted in Chapel Hall open meetings dealing with important community or national subjects.

The great depression of the thirties would be scarcely suggested except in the reduction of the Church budget and the falling off in numbers of those attending the suppers preceding the annual meetings.

In the Second World War two hundred and eighty-three men and women of the Church served in the armed forces. Seven of these gave their lives:

Chester Coburn Darling, Jr.

Charles Elder Frederick

John Keats Hull

Houghton Letts

John Andrew McGreevy

Alan Winthrop Moses

Carter Palmer

Robert Meggett Steel Walker

A special committee of the Church was organized to maintain the contact of the Church with those of its sons and daughters who were in service. Mention of the War Memorial has already been made.

The last of the life deacons died during the years of Dr. Bradford's ministry. They were staunch men, loyal men, men of deep purpose and conviction. Mr. Frederic H. Fuller served for slightly more than 50 years as Deacon. He was the elder statesman of the Church. He served long as President of the Providence Y.M.C.A. His interest was keen in the Portuguese Chapel. The fiftieth anniversary of his election as Deacon was observed at the annual meeting in 1935, when Prof. Theodore F. Collier, Dr. Moore, and Dr. Atkins, the latter two former ministers of the Church,

spoke with deep feeling. A large photograph of Mr. Fuller, now in Memorial Chapel, was unveiled. Illness prevented his presence, but he knew of the observance. He died within the following year. Mr. James C. Kimball, an upright, serious man, died in 1923. Mr. Arthur W. Claflin, long active in the Sunday School and because of his abundant good spirits loved by younger people, died early in 1926. Mr. H. Edward Thurston, a man of probity and deep convictions, for twelve years Secretary of the Society, died during the Church year 1923-1924. He was shortly followed in death by Mr. Charles R. Makepeace, a man of dependable judgment, a tower of strength in the spiritual life of the Church. With the exception of Mr. Fuller, the last to die was Mr. Arthur W. Fairchild, like the rest, stalwart, loving the Church, moved to tears when he asked younger men to become deacons of the Church.

Mr. R. Clinton Fuller, the brother of Mr. Frederic C. Fuller, though never a deacon, served for twenty-six years as Church Treasurer. The duties of the position in those days were arduous. Each Sunday he took the plate collection home and counted it and credited the gifts in the envelopes to the proper givers. He was also a member of the Music Committee for the period 1926-1936 and Chairman for the last of these three years.

Much more could profitably be written of the last thirty-four years of the Church's life. What has been said must, however, suffice.

The future of the Church is a big, big subject. As far as its local or neighborhood problems are concerned, the East

Side has remained a reasonably static community. However, the neighborhood of the Church is becoming gradually less and less a residential area. What problems this fact poses must remain a question mark.

Great problems as well as great opportunities confront Congregational Churches over the nation. There is a need to revive faith and the belief in the purposefulness of life. There is a need to extend the ecumenical Protestant movement. There is no room in the Christian Church for many of the sectarian divisions that exist. Finally, it is tremendously important to make Christians see the Christian ethical implications of all our problems, social, political, economic, and international.

We who know Central Congregational Church are confident that by tradition and experience it is well qualified to meet these problems.

CONCLUSION

And so a century of Christian trusteeship has come to an end, and another century begins. The story of Central Congregational Church has been told in the words of those who have approached their task in varying aspects of historical perspective. Factual details have provided the basis for independent judgment, yet critical appraisals have not been neglected: the names of men and women who have carried the responsibility of past endeavors have recalled many another name of those who have likewise shared in the task. And from the composite picture, necessarily abbreviated in narration, there emerges a pattern of endeavor that represents in a world of turmoil and dissension a continuing tradition of Christian faith. That is the story of the past. It is a record before which we of the present pause for a moment in pride and gratitude. But the moment is brief, for the tide of life moves steadily forward, and the mood of the Church, as it celebrates its first centenary, is one of vitality, of the conscious acceptance of responsibility, and of eyes turned courageously toward whatever the future may hold of opportunity and of duty.



This book was composed in the traditional bookface called Monotype Janson and typography by L & W Service Co. The typeface is based on types cut by the Dutch letter founder Anton Janson. Most of his work as a punch cutter was done between the years 1660 and 1687.

